A

COLLECTION

OF

HEOLOGICAL TRACTS,

IN SIX VOLUMES.

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AND
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CAMBRIDGE.

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M.DCC.XCI.

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TO THE

QUEEN.

MADAM,

NO original work of mine could possibly have been so deserving of Your Majesty's attention, as this Collection of other men's labours undoubtedly is. Our Infancy is indebted to that Sex of which Your Majesty is the highest Ornament, for the first principles of Religious Education; and as one of the main objects of

this publication is—the preſerving Youth from Infidelity—I cannot do the Public a greater ſervice than by requeſting Your Majeſty to give it your protection.

The intereſts of civil Society require that we ſhould pay deference to perſons of Rank, even though they happen not to be perſons of Merit. But this is a limited and conſtrained deference; it is paid with reluctance; and is both in kind and extent wholly unlike that which all good Citizens are ambitious of ſhewing to Your Majeſty. My character has hitherto, I truſt, never been eſteemed that of a Flatterer; nor do I fear the imputation of it, in ſaying, That to Your Majeſty's Rank alone I would not have given even this mark, worthleſs as it may ſeem, of my Veneration and Reſpect.

I verily believe Your Majeſty to be one of the beſt Wives, and one of the beſt Mothers, in England. The Time is approaching,—diſtant may it be! when the recollection of the example which You have ſhewn to Women of every Rank, in theſe great points of female Duty (the greateſt on which Women of the higheſt Rank ought to build their worth of character), will give Your Majeſty far more comfort than I can poſſibly deſcribe; but not more than I, in conjunction with

Thouſands

DEDICATION.

Thouſands in every part of the Kingdom, heartily wiſh and pray Your Majeſty may at all times, and eſpecially at that time, enjoy.

I am,

MADAM,

With the greateſt and moſt ſincere Reſpect,

Your MAJESTY's

Moſt obedient Servant,

RICHARD LANDAFF.

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OF THE

FIRST VOLUME.

A Scheme of Scripture-Divinity, formed upon the Plan of the Divine Diſpenſations. With a Vindication of the Sacred Writings. By J. TAYLOR, D. D. *Lond.* 1762. p. 4.

This Book deſerves to be generally known; it has been for ſome Years out of Print, and much ſought after by the Clergy: I thought I ſhould do them an acceptable Service in making it a part of this Collection.

Reflexions upon the Books of the Holy Scripture, to eſtabliſh the Truth of the Chriſtian Religion. In two Volumes. *Lond.* 1688. By P. ALLIX. p. 220.

Theſe two Volumes were publiſhed in French, the Firſt in London, and the Second at Amſterdam, much about the ſame Time that they made their Appearance in Engliſh. They were ſpoken of with Reſpect in the *Acta Eruditorum* for 1688; were tranſlated into German at *Nurenberg* in 1702: and have been always held in great Repute for the Plainneſs and Erudition with which they are written. The Author was a French Refugee of diſtinguiſhed Learning and Integrity; the Reader will meet with a good Account of his Life and Writings in the Biographia Britanniea.

PREFACE.

IN publiſhing this Collection of Theological Tracts I have had no other end in view, but to afford young perſons of every denomination, and eſpecially to afford the Students in the Univerſities, and the younger Clergy, an eaſy opportunity of becoming better acquainted with the grounds and principles of the Chriſtian Religion than, there is reaſon to apprehend, many of them at preſent are. My firſt intention was to have admitted into the Collection, ſuch ſmall tracts only in Latin or Engliſh, on Theological Subjects, as had ſunk into unmerited oblivion; but, on maturer reflexion, I thought it better to conſult the general utility of the younger and leſs informed Clergy, than to aim at gratifying the curioſity, or improving the underſtanding, of thoſe who were more advanced in years and knowledge. Inſtead therefore of confining myſelf to ſingle tracts, I have not ſcrupled to publiſh ſome entire books; but they are books of ſuch acknowledged worth, that no Clergyman ought to be unacquainted with their contents; and by making them a part of this Collection, they may chance to engage the attention of many who would otherwiſe have overlooked them. It would have been an eaſy matter to have laid down anexten ſive plan of ſtudy for young Divines, and to have made a great ſhew of learning by introducing into it a Syſtematic Arrangement of Hiſtorians, Critics, and Commentators, who, in different ages and in different languages, have employed their talents on Theological Subjects. But there is a faſhion in ſtudy as in other purſuits; and the taſte of the preſent age is not calculated for the making great exertions in Theological Criticiſm and Philology. I do not conſider the Tracts which are here publiſhed as ſufficient to make what is called a deep Divine; but they will go a great way towards making, what is of more worth—a well-informed Chriſtian. In Divinity, perhaps, more than

in any other ſcience, it may be reckoned a virtue *aliqua neſcire*; for what Quinctilian obſerves of hiſtorical, is certainly very applicable to an abundance of Theological writings.——*Perſequi quidem quod quiſque umquam vel contemptiſſimorum hominum dixerit, aut nimiæ miſeriæ, aut inanis jactantiæ eſt; et detinet atque obruit Ingenia, melius aliis vacatura.*

If any thing can revive a ſenſe of Religion in the higher claſſes of life; preſerve what ſtill remains of it amongſt men of middling fortunes; and bring back to decency of manners and the fear of God, the loweſt of the people; it muſt be——the Zeal of the Clergy. But Zeal, in order to produce its proper effect, muſt be founded in knowledge: it will otherwiſe (where, from ſome peculiar temperament of body or mind, it happens to exiſt at all) be unſteady in its operation; it will be counteracted by the prejudices of the world, the ſuggeſtions of ſelf-intereſt, the importunities of indolent habits; or it will be tainted by Fanaticiſm, and inſtead of producing in every individual ſober thoughts of his Chriſtian duty, it will hurry into dangerous errors the ignorant and unthinking, and excite the abhorrence or deriſion of men of ſenſe. I have therefore, in ſelecting the works which compoſe this publication, not ſo much attended to the diſcuſſion of particular doctrines, as to the general arguments which are beſt adapted to produce in the Clergy, and in others who will conſider them, a well-grounded perſuaſion that Chriſtianity is not a *cunningly deviſed fable, but the power of God unto ſalvation to every one that believeth.* That Clergyman who is a Chriſtian, not becauſe he happens to have been born in a Chriſtian country, but from rational conviction, will never think himſelf at liberty to make light of his calling; to ſuit his inſtructions to the vicious propenſities of his audience; to ſcandalize his profeſſion by a conformity with the ungodly faſhions of the world; to be aſhamed of the Croſs of Chriſt, though he ſhould ſee it attacked by the ſubtlety of Sophiſts, or ridiculed by the wanton audacity of profane men. A deficiency of Zeal indeed in religious concerns does not always proceed, either in the Clergy or Laity, from a want of Knowledge: ſenſual appetites, ungoverned paſſions, worldly cuſtoms, all combine together in making moſt men languid in the performance of even clear and acknowledged duties; yet it muſt be confeſſed, that a firm belief in the truth of Chriſtianity reſulting from a comprehenſive view of the proofs by which it is eſtabliſhed, is the moſt probable mean of producing in all men integrity of life; and of animating, eſpecially, the Miniſters of the Goſpel, to a zealous and diſcreet diſcharge of their paſtoral functions.

Young

Young men who are ordained from Country Schools are frequently, when ſettled in their Curacies, at a loſs what courſe of ſtudies to purſue: and many of them, as well as many of thoſe who have had the benefit of an Univerſity-Education, are unhappily in no condition to expend much money in the purchaſe of Theological books, even if they knew how to make a proper ſelection. Both theſe difficulties are, I hope, in ſome degree obviated by this publication; which contains nearly as much matter as three times the number of ordinary volumes of the ſame ſize; and the matter itſelf has been taken from Authors of ſuch eſtabliſhed reputation, that he who will take the pains to read and digeſt what is here offered to him, will have acquired no inconſiderable knowledge in Divinity. But in Divinity, as in every other ſtudy, a man muſt think much for himſelf; thoſe who have gone before in the ſame purſuit may point out the road to him, but that is the main good they can do him: if he loiters in his progreſs, waiting for the vigilance of others to puſh him on, he will never get to his journey's end. The Lectures of Profeſſors and Tutors are doubtleſs of great uſe in every ſcience; but their uſe does not conſiſt ſo much in rendering the ſcience intelligible, if we except the firſt Elements of the abſtract Sciences, as in directing the attention of the Students to the beſt books on every ſubject; and if to this they add a frequent examination into the progreſs which the Students have made, they will have done all that reaſonably can be expected from them. The Republic of Letters is in very different circumſtances in the preſent age from what it was three centuries ago: the multiplicity of books which, in the courſe of that period, have been publiſhed in every Art and Science, has enlarged the boundaries of knowledge, and given every man an opportunity, if he be not wanting to himſelf, of becoming ſkilled in that branch of Literature which he ſhall think fit to cultivate. And to ſpeak the truth, though there may be ſome dark points in Divinity which the labour of Learning may ſtill illuſtrate, yet new books are not ſo much wanted in that Science, as inclination in the younger Clergy to explore the treaſures of the old ones.

A young man deſtined to the Church, who thinks that he has completed his Education as ſoon as he has taken his firſt degree in Arts, and quitted the walls of his College, is under a very great miſtake. His memory may have been ſtocked with a great abundance of Claſſical Knowledge; his mind may have been expanded by a general acquaintance with the ſeveral branches of Natural Philoſophy; his reaſoning faculties may have been

ſtrengthened by Mathematical Reſearches; the limits of his underſtanding may have been in ſome degree aſcertained by the ſtudy of Natural Religion; in a word, he may have been admirably fitted to become a Divine: but if, after this preparation, he ſtops ſhort, giving himſelf up to rural amuſements, miſſpending his time in idle avocations, blunting his faculties by ſenſual indulgencies, indolently or arrogantly acquieſcing in the knowledge he has acquired, he will never be one.

I am far from wiſhing to divert the attention of the Undergraduates from that courſe of ſtudies which is eſtabliſhed in this place. There is no Univerſity, I believe, in Europe, where the degree of Bachelor of Arts is more honourably obtained than in the Univerſity of Cambridge: the ſedulity with which the young men, in general, purſue the plan of ſtudy which is preſcribed to them, is highly commendable; and, if I recommend it to them to let Theology make a part of that plan, it is not from an opinion that Theological ſtudies are more proper for their time of life than any of thoſe in which they are engaged; but from an apprehenſion, that if they do not make ſome progreſs in Divinity, during the firſt years of their Academical Education, they will have no opportunity of doing it before they will be placed in ſituations which require a great proficiency in it. The Statutes indeed of the Univerſity, and of many private Colleges, though they point out Theology as the ultimate End of all our ſtudies, do not order us to ſtudy Divinity till we have ſtudied almoſt every other branch of Science: but it ought to be remembered that, at the time theſe Statutes were made, young men were admitted into the Univerſity about the age of fourteen; and conſequently commencing Maſters of Arts about the age of twenty-one, they had a conſiderable interval, even after taking their ſecond degree in Arts, in which they might prepare themſelves for entering into holy Orders.

It is not the reading many books which makes a man a Divine, but the reading a few of the beſt books often over, and with attention; thoſe at leaſt who are beginning their Theological ſtudies ſhould follow this rule. I have no ſcruple therefore in recommending it to the Students in the Univerſities, to read this Collection twice or thrice over before they take their firſt degree; the doing this will give little interruption to their other ſtudies; and if it ſhould give a great deal, their time will not be miſemployed. Let them dedicate a ſmall portion of every day, or the whole of every Sunday, to this occupation; and, in the courſe of three or four years, they will eaſily accompliſh the taſk; and, when

it

t is accompliſhed, they may offer themſelves to the Biſhops to be ordained, with a becoming confidence that they are not wholly unprepared; and they may undertake the moſt important of all human Duties——the Cure of Souls——without being alarmed by a conſciouſneſs of their inability to diſcharge it as becometh *the ſervants of the moſt high God*. When I thus expreſs myſelf concerning the fruits which may be expected from the courſe of ſtudy here pointed out, I am far from inſinuating, that it will ſuperſede the neceſſity of ſtudying the Scriptures themſelves, with the beſt aſſiſtance which can be obtained from Commentators: on the contrary, I am perſuaded that one part of Scripture is beſt interpreted by another, and that no ſort of reading can contribute ſo much to the producing of a ſteady faith, a rational piety, a true Chriſtian charity of mind (the great ends of all our ſtudies, and all our purſuits!) as the frequent reading of the Scriptures.

But the ſtudents who are deſigned for the Church, are not the only ones to whom I would recommend the practice of ſetting apart ſome portion of their time for religious inquiries; I would preſs it with the greateſt earneſtneſs and ſincerity on the young men of rank and fortune. I would eſpecially intreat them to peruſe with unprejudiced minds, the whole of this Collection; but particularly, and with the ſtricteſt attention, the Firſt, Fourth, and Fifth Volumes of it: they will there find ſuch convincing proofs of the Chriſtian Religion, as will preſerve them, I truſt, from that contagion of infidelity which is the diſgrace of the age. It is a very wonderful thing, that a being ſuch as man, placed on a little globe of earth, in a little corner of the univerſe, cut off from all communication with the other ſyſtems which are diſperſed through the immenſity of ſpace, impriſoned as it were on the ſpot where he happens to be born, almoſt utterly ignorant of the variety of ſpiritual exiſtences, and circumſcribed in his knowledge of material things, by their remoteneſs, magnitude, or minuteneſs, a ſtranger to the nature of the very pebbles on which he treads, unacquainted, or but very obſcurely informed by his natural faculties of his condition after death; it is wonderful, that a being ſuch as this ſhould reluctantly receive, or faſtidiouſly reject, the inſtruction of the Eternal God! or, if this is ſaying too much, that he ſhould haſtily, and negligently, and triumphantly conclude, that the Supreme Being never had condeſcended to inſtruct the race of man. It might properly have been expected, that a rational being, ſo circumſtanced, would have ſedulouſly inquired into a ſubject of ſuch vaſt importance; that he would not have

have ſuffered himſelf to have been diverted from the inveſtigation by the purſuits of wealth, or honour, or any temporal concern; much leſs by notions taken up without attention, arguments admitted without examination, or prejudices imbibed in early youth, from the profane ridicule, or impious jeſtings of ſenſual and immoral men. It is from the influence of ſuch prejudices that I would guard that part of the riſing generation which is committed to our care, by recommending to them a ſerious peruſal of the Tracts which are here preſented to them. Let them not refuſe to follow this advice, becauſe it is given to them by a churchman; he can have no poſſible intereſt in giving it, except what may reſult to him from the conſciouſneſs of endeavouring to diſcharge his duty, and the hope of being ſerviceable to them in this world and the next. They need not queſtion his veracity, when he ſpeaks of religion as being ſerviceable to them in this world; for it is a trite objection, and grounded on a miſapprehenſion of the deſign of Chriſtianity, which would repreſent it as an intolerable yoke, ſo oppoſite to the propenſities, as to be utterly deſtructive of the felicity of the human mind. It is, in truth, quite the reverſe; there is not a ſingle precept in the Goſpel, without excepting either that which ordains the forgiveneſs of injuries, or that which commands every one *to poſſeſs his veſſel in ſanctification and honour*, which is not calculated to promote our happineſs. Chriſtianity regulates, but does not extinguiſh our affections; and in the due regulation of our affections conſiſts our happineſs as reaſonable beings. If there is one condition in this life more happy than another, it is, ſurely, that of him who founds all his hope of futurity on the promiſes of the Goſpel; who carefully endeavours to conform his actions to its precepts; looking upon the great God Almighty as his Protector here, his Rewarder hereafter, and his everlaſting Preſerver. This is a frame of mind ſo perfective of our nature, that if Chriſtianity, from a belief of which it can only be derived, was as certainly falſe, as it is certainly true, one could not help wiſhing that it might be univerſally received in the world. Unbelievers attempt to make proſelytes to infidelity, by preſſing upon the minds of the unlearned in Scripture knowledge, the authorities of *Bolingbrooke*, *Voltaire*, *Helvetius*, *Hume*, and other Deiſtical writers. It is proper that young men ſhould be furniſhed with a ready anſwer to arguments in favour of infidelity, which are taken from the high literary character of thoſe who profeſs it; let them remember then, that *Bacon*, *Boyle*, *Newton*, *Grotius*, *Locke*, *Euler*, —that *Addiſon*, *Hartley*, *Haller*, *Weſt*, *Jenyns*——that Lords *Nottingham*,

Nottingham, King, Barrington, Lyttelton, with an hundred other *laymen,* who were ſurely as eminent for their literary attainments in every kind of ſcience as either Bolingbroke or Voltaire, were profeſſed *believers* of Chriſtianity. I am quite aware that the truth of Chriſtianity cannot be eſtabliſhed by authorities; but neither can its falſehood be ſo eſtabliſhed. Arguments *ad verecundiam* have little weight with thoſe who know how to uſe any others, but they have weight with the lazy and the ignorant on both ſides of the queſtion. But though I have here ſuggeſted to young men a ready anſwer to ſuch of their profligate acquaintance as may wiſh to work upon their *prejudices* in favour of infidelity; yet I hope they will not content themſelves with being *prejudiced* even in favour of Chriſtianity: they will find in this Collection, ſuch ſolid arguments in ſupport of its truth, as cannot fail to confirm them, on the moſt rational grounds, in the belief of the Goſpel Diſpenſation. They may wonder, perhaps, if religion be ſo uſeful a thing as is here repreſented, that their parents ſhould have ſeldom or never converſed with them on the ſubject.——If this ſhould be the fact, I can only ſay, that it is a neglect, of all others, the moſt to be regretted. And indeed our mode of education, as to religious knowledge, is very defective; the child is inſtructed in its catechiſm before it is able to comprehend its meaning, and that is uſually all the domeſtic inſtruction which it ever receives. But whatever may be the negligence of parents in teaching their children Chriſtianity, or how forcibly ſoever the maxims and cuſtoms of the world may conſpire in confirming men in infidelity, it is the duty of thoſe to whom the Education of youth is intruſted, not to deſpair: their diligence will have its uſe; it will prevent a bad matter from becoming worſe; and if this *fooliſhneſs of preaching,* into which I have been betrayed on this occaſion, has but the effect of making even one young man of fortune examine into the truth of the Chriſtian Religion, who would not otherwiſe have done it, I ſhall not repent the having been *inſtant out of ſeaſon.*

> Diſcite, O Miſeri, et cauſas cognoſcite rerum
> Quid ſumus, et quidnam victuri gignimur: ordo
> Quis datus;——quem te Deus eſſe
> Juſſit.——————————

Theſe were queſtions which even the Heathen Moraliſts thought it a ſhame for a man never to have conſidered. How much more cenſurable are thoſe amongſt ourſelves who waſte their days in folly

folly or vice, without ever reflecting upon the providential diſpenſation under which they live, without having any ſublimer piety, any purer morality, any better hopes of futurity than the Heathens had?

In recommending this Collection to the careful peruſal of the younger Clergy, I would not be underſtood to vouch for the truth of every opinion which is contained in it; by no means; there is no certainty of truth but in the word of God. Their Bible is the only ſure foundation upon which they ought to build every article of the faith which they profeſs, every point of doctrine which they teach. All other foundations, whether they be the deciſions of councils, the confeſſions of churches, the preſcripts of popes, or the expoſitions of private men, ought to be conſidered by them as ſandy and unſafe, as in no wiſe fit to be ultimately relied on. Nor, on the other hand, are they to be faſtidiouſly rejected, as of no uſe; for though the Bible be the one infallible rule by which we muſt meaſure the truth or falſehood of every religious opinion, yet all men are not equally fitted to apply this rule; and the wiſeſt men want on many occaſions all the helps of human learning to enable them to underſtand its preciſe nature, and to define its certain extent. Theſe helps are great and numerous; they have been ſupplied in every age, ſince the death of Chriſt, by the united labours of learned men in every country where his religion has been received. Great Britain has not been backward in her endeavours to eſtabliſh the truth, and to illuſtrate the doctrines of Chriſtianity: ſhe has not abounded ſo much in ſyſtematic Divines as Germany and Holland have done; yet the moſt difficult points of Theology have been as well diſcuſſed by our Engliſh Divines, as by thoſe of any other nation. In proof of this, I might mention the works of Pearſon, Mede, Barrow, Burnet, Chillingworth, Stillingfleet, Clarke, Tillotſon, Taylor, Benſon, Jortin, Secker, and an hundred others; but the ſermons preached at Boyle's Lecture, and the Collection of Tracts againſt Popery, render every other argument in ſupport of the obſervation wholly unneceſſary. The freedom of inquiry too, which has ſubſiſted in this country during the preſent century, has eventually been of great ſervice to the cauſe of Chriſtianity. It muſt be acknowledged that the works of our Deiſtical writers have made ſome few converts to infidelity at home, and that they have furniſhed the *Eſprits forts* of France, and the *Frey-Geiſters* of Germany, with every material objection to our religion, which they have of late years diſplayed with much affectation of originality: but at the ſame time, we muſt needs allow, that

at theſe works have ſtimulated ſome diſtinguiſhed characters
nongſt the Laity, and many amongſt the Clergy, to exert their
lents in removing ſuch difficulties in the Chriſtian ſyſtem, as
ould otherwiſe be likely to perplex the unlearned, to ſhipwreck
e faith of the unſtable, and to induce a reluctant ſcepticiſm
to the minds of the moſt ſerious and beſt intentioned. Some
fficulties ſtill remain; and it would be a miracle greater than
ny we are inſtructed to believe, if there remained none; if a
eing with but five ſcanty inlets of knowledge, ſeparated but
eſterday from his mother Earth, and to-day ſinking again into
er boſom, could fathom the depths of the wiſdom and know-
dge of *Him which is, which was, and which is to come,——the
ord God Almighty, to whom be glory and dominion for ever and
ver.*

We live in a diſſolute but enlightened age; the reſtraints of
ur Religion are ill ſuited to the profligacy of our manners;
nd men are ſoon induced to believe that ſyſtem to be falſe,
hich we wiſh to find ſo: that knowledge, moreover, which
urns with contempt the illuſions of fanaticiſm and the tyranny
f ſuperſtition, is often unhappily miſemployed, in magnifying
very little difficulty attending the proof of the truth Chriſ-
anity, into an irrefragable argument of its falſehood. The
hriſtian Religion has nothing to apprehend from the ſtricteſt
nveſtigation of the moſt learned of its adverſaries; it ſuffers
nly from the miſconceptions of ſciolifts, and ſilly pretenders to
uperior wiſdom: a little learning is far more dangerous to the
aith of thoſe who poſſeſs it, than ignorance itſelf. Some, I know,
ffect to believe, that as the reſtoration of letters was ruinous to
he Romiſh Religion, ſo the further cultivation of them will be
ubverſive of Chriſtianity itſelf: of this there is no danger. It
nay be ſubverſive of the Reliques of the Church of Rome by
hich other churches are ſtill polluted; of perſecutions, of ana-
hemas, of eccleſiaſtical domination over God's heritage, of all
he ſilly outworks which the pride, the ſuperſtition, the knavery
f mankind have erected around the citadel of our faith; but the
itadel itſelf is founded on a rock, the gates of hell cannot
revail againſt it, its maſter-builder is God; its beauty will be
ound ineffable, and its ſtrength impregnable, when it ſhall be
reed from the frippery of human ornaments, cleared from the
ubbiſh of human bulwarks. It is no ſmall part of the province
f a teacher of Chriſtianity, to diſtinguiſh between the word of
God, and the additions which men have made to it. The objec-
ions of unbelievers are frequently levelled againſt what is not
Chriſtianity,

Chriſtianity, but mere human ſyſtem; and he will be beſt abl to defend the former, who is leaſt ſtudious to ſupport the airy pre tenſions of the latter. The effect of eſtabliſhed ſyſtems i obſtructing truth, is to the laſt degree deplorable: every one ſee it in other churches, but ſcarcely any one ſuſpects it in his own *Calvin*, I queſtion not, thought it almoſt impoſſible that the Scrip tures could ever have been ſo far perverted as to afford the *Ro maniſts* any handle for their doctrine of Tranſubſtantiation, o that the underſtanding of any human being could have beer ſo far debaſed, or rather ſo utterly annihilated, as to believe in it for a moment: yet this ſame *Calvin* followed St. *Auguſtine* in the doctrine of abſolute perſonal reprobation and election, incul cating it as a fundamental article of faith, with nearly the ſame unchriſtian zeal which infatuated him when he faſtened *Servetus* to the ſtake. A thouſand inſtances of this blind attachment to ſyſtem might be taken from the Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory of every century; indeed the whole of it is little more than the hiſtory of the ſtruggles of different ſects to overturn the ſyſtems of others, in order to build up their own; and the great leſſon which every ſect, and every individual of every ſect, ought to learn from its peruſal, is—Moderation. Want of genuine moderation towards thoſe who differ from us in religious opinions, ſeems to be the moſt unaccountable thing in the world. Every man, who has any religion at all, feels within himſelf a ſtronger motive to judge right, than you can poſſibly ſuggeſt to him; and, if he judges wrong, what is that to you? To his own maſter he ſtandeth or falleth; his wrong judgment may affect his own ſalvation, it cannot affect yours; for, in the words of *Tertullian*——*nec alii obeſt aut prodeſt alterius religio:* this you muſt admit, unleſs you think it your duty to inſtruct him; but inſtruction may be given with moderation; and conſidering that the Bible is as open to him as it is to you, you ought not to be over certain that it is your duty to preſs your inſtruction upon him; for what is, ordinarily ſpeaking, your inſtruction, but an attempt to bring him over to your opinion? This principle ſhould be received with great caution, or it may do much miſchief; for it is on this principle that the Roman Catholics light up the fires of the inquiſition, and compaſs ſea and land to make a proſelyte——a proſelyte! to what we Proteſtants believe to be the deluſion of Satan, the very canker of Chriſtianity, the grand apoſtaſy from the Goſpel foretold by St. *Paul*. The Catholics however in this point act conſiſtently; for, believing in the infallibility of their church, they have a plea for their

eir zeal in bringing every one within its pale, which can never urged by Proteſtants, with any ſhadow of juſtice and pro-iety.

There are many queſtions in Divinity, in the inveſtigating of hich the mind fluctuates with an irkſome uncertainty, unable perceive ſuch a preponderance of argument as will warrant it embracing as true, either the one ſide or the other. This ſitation ariſes, in many caſes, from our not underſtanding the ll meaning of the language, be it common or figurative, in hich a doctrine is revealed. In ſome, it proceeds from our tempting to apprehend definitely, what is expreſſed indeter-inately or clearly, what God hath not thought proper clearly reveal; in others, it is to be attributed to an indeciſion of mper, to which ſome men are peculiarly ſubject: but let it iginate from what cauſe it may, it is far more tolerable than an rogant temerity of judgment. A ſuſpicion of fallibility would ave been an uſeful principle to the profeſſors of Chriſtianity in ery age; it would have choaked the ſpirit of perſecution in its rth, and have rendered not only the church of Rome, but every hurch in Chriſtendom, more ſhy of aſſuming to itſelf the proud tle of Orthodox, and of branding every other with the oppro-ious one of Heterodox, than any of them have hitherto been. here are, you will ſay, doubtleſs, ſome fundamental doctrines in hriſtianity.——*Paul*, the Apoſtle, has laid down one founda-on; and he tells us, that *other foundation can no man lay, than at is laid, which is Jeſus——The Chriſt.*——But this propo-tion——Jeſus is the Meſſiah——includes, you will reply, veral others, which are equally true. I acknowledge that it oes ſo; and it is every man's duty to ſearch the Scriptures, that e may know what thoſe truths are; but I do not conceive it to e any man's duty, to anathematize thoſe who cannot ſubſcribe *his* catalogue of fundamental Chriſtian verities. That man is ot to be eſteemed an *Atheiſt*, who acknowledges the exiſtence of God, the Creator of the univerſe, though he cannot aſſent to all e *truths* of natural religion, which *other* men may undertake to educe from that principle: nor is he to be eſteemed a *Deiſt*, ho acknowledges that Jeſus of Nazareth *is indeed the Chriſt, the aviour of the world*, though he cannot aſſent to all the *truths* of vealed religion, which *other* men may think themſelves war-nted in deducing from thence. Still you will probably rejoin, ere muſt be many truths in the Chriſtian religion, concerning hich no one ought to heſitate, inaſmuch as, without a belief in em, he cannot be reputed a Chriſtian.—Reputed! by whom? By

Jeſus

Jesus Christ his Lord and his God, or by you?——Rash expositors of points of doubtful disputation; intolerant fabricators of metaphysical Creeds, and incongruous Systems of Theology! Do you undertake to measure the extent of any man's understanding, except your own; to estimate the strength and origin of his habits of thinking; to appreciate his merit or demerit in the use of the talent which God has given him, so as unerringly to pronounce that the belief of this or that doctrine is necessary to his salvation? It is undoubtedly necessary to yours, if you are persuaded that it comes from God; but you take too much upon you, when you erect yourself into an infallible judge of truth and falsehood. We, as Christians, are under no uncertainty as to the being of a God; as to his moral government of the world; as to the terms on which sinners may be reconciled to him; as to *the redemption that is in Jesus Christ*; as to a resurrection from the dead; as of a future state of retribution; nor with respect to other important questions, concerning which the wisest of the Heathen Philosophers were either wholly ignorant, or had no settled notions. But there are other subjects on which the *Academicorum* εποχη may be admitted, I apprehend, without injuring the foundations of our Religion: such are the questions which relate to the power of Evil Spirits to suspend the laws of nature, or to actuate the minds of men; to the materiality or immateriality of the human soul; the state of the dead before the general resurrection; the resurrection of the same body; the duration of future punishments; and many others of the same kind. Some one will think that I here speak too freely, and accuse me, probably, as an encourager of sceptical and latitudinarian principles. ——What! Shall the church of Christ never be freed from the narrow-minded contentions of bigots; from the insults of men who know not what spirit they are of, when they would stint the Omnipotent in the exercise of his mercy, and bar the doors of heaven against every sect but their own? Shall we never learn to think more humbly of ourselves, and less despicably of others? to believe that the Father of the universe accommodates not his judgments to the wretched wranglings of pedantic Theologues; but that every one, who, with an honest intention, and to the best of his ability seeketh the truth, whether he findeth it or not, and worketh righteousness, will be accepted of him? I have no regard for latitudinarian principles, nor for any principles, but the principles of Truth; and Truth every man must endeavour to investigate for himself; and, ordinarily speaking, he will be most successful

ſucceſsful in his endeavours, who examines, with candour and care, what can be urged on each ſide of a greatly controverted queſtion. This ſort of examination may, in ſome inſtances, produce a doubt, an heſitation, a diffident ſuſpenſion of judgment; but it will at the ſame time produce mutual forbearance and good temper towards thoſe who differ from us; our charity will be enlarged, as our underſtanding is improved. Partial examination is the parent of pertinacity of opinion; and a froward propenſity to be angry with thoſe who queſtion the validity of our principles, or deny the juſtneſs of our concluſions, in any matter reſpecting philoſophy, policy, or religion, is an infallible mark of prejudice; of our having grounded our opinions on faſhion, fancy, intereſt; on the unexamined tenets of our family, ſect, or party; on any thing rather than on the ſolid foundation of cool and diſpaſſionate reaſoning——*Iliacos intra muros peccatur et extra*——Churchmen as well as Diſſenters, and diſſenters as well as churchmen, are apt to give a degree of aſſent to opinions beyond what they can give a reaſon for; this is the very eſſence of prejudice: it is difficult for any man entirely to diveſt himſelf of all prejudice, but he may ſurely take care that it be not accompanied with an uncharitable propenſity to ſtigmatize with reproachful appellations, thoſe who cannot meaſure the rectitude of the Divine diſpenſations by his rule, nor ſeek their way to heaven, by inſiſting on the path which he, in his overweening wiſdom, has arrogantly preſcribed as the only one which can lead men thither.

This intolerant ſpirit has abated much of its violence in the courſe of this century amongſt ourſelves: we pray to God that it may be utterly extinguiſhed in every part of Chriſtendom, and that the true ſpirit of Chriſtianity, which is the ſpirit of meekneſs, peace, and love, may be introduced in its ſtead. If different men, in carefully and conſcientiouſly examining the Scriptures, ſhould arrive at different concluſions, even on points of the laſt importance; we truſt that God, who alone knows what every man is capable of, will be merciful to him that is in error. We truſt that he will pardon the Unitarian, if he be in an error, becauſe he has fallen into it from the dread of becoming an Idolater, of giving that glory to another which he conceives to be due to God alone. If the worſhipper of Jeſus Chriſt be in an error, we truſt that God will pardon his miſtake, becauſe he has fallen into it from a dread of diſobeying what he conceives to be *revealed* concerning the *nature* of the Son, or *commanded* concerning the *honour* to be given him. Both are actuated by the ſame principle—THE FEAR

OF GOD; and, though that principle impels them into different roads, it is our hope and belief, that, if they add to their faith charity, they will meet in heaven.——If any one thinks differently on the ſubject, I will have no contention with him; for I feel no diſpoſition to proſelyte others to any opinion of mine: eſteeming it a duty to ſpeak what I think, I have no ſcruple in doing that; but to do more is to affect a tyranny over other men's minds; it is to encounter not only the reaſon, but the paſſions, prejudices, and intereſts of mankind; it is to engage in a conflict, in which Chriſtian charity ſeldom eſcapes unhurt on either ſide.

Too much pains cannot be taken by the Clergy in examining the external and internal evidences of the truth of the Goſpel, in order that they may generate in their own minds a full conviction of the unſpeakable importance of the work in which they are engaged; but that conviction being once produced, their time will be far more uſefully employed in diſcharging their paſtoral office with fidelity, than in weighing the importance of all the diſcordant ſyſtems of faith, which have in different ages and countries, not merely occupied the attention of Schoolmen and Monks, but unſheathed the ſwords of princes, and polluted the temple of *Chriſt* with more blood than was ever ſhed on the altars of *Moloch*, or in honour of *Vitzliliputzuli*, the God of *Mexico*. Happily for our age, this ſpirit of perſecution is well nigh extinguiſhed; for notwithſtanding the ſad fate of the *Calas* family in *France*; notwithſtanding the demon of fanaticiſm which ſpread its deluſion over London and Edinburgh, on the relaxation of the laws againſt Popery; notwithſtanding the burning zeal of a few furious bigots amongſt every ſect of Chriſtians; ſtill may we foretel, from obſerving *the ſigns of the times*, that the æra is approaching very faſt, when Theological Acrimony ſhall be ſwallowed up in Evangelical Charity, and a liberal toleration become the diſtinguiſhing feature of every church in Chriſtendom. The ruling powers in Proteſtant and Catholic ſtates begin at length every where to perceive, that an uniformity of ſentiment in matters of religion is a circumſtance impoſſible to be obtained; that it has never yet exiſted in the church of Chriſt, from the Apoſtolic age to our own; and they begin to be aſhamed of the fines, confiſcations, impriſonments, tortures, of all the unjuſt and ſanguinary efforts which they have ſeverally made uſe of to procure it. They perceive too that a diverſity in religious opinions may ſubſiſt among the ſubjects of the ſame ſtate, without endangering the common weal; and they begin to think it reaſonable, tha

no

no man ſhould be abridged in the exerciſe of natural rights, merely on the ſcore of Religion. Theſe enlarged ſentiments proceed not, I would willingly hope, from what the Germans have called *Indifferentiſm* in Religion; but partly from a perfect knowledge of its true end, which is Charity; and partly from that conſciouſneſs of intellectual weakneſs, which is ever moſt conſpicuous in minds the moſt enlightened; and which, wherever it ſubſiſts, puts a ſtop to dogmatiſm and intolerance of every kind.

The Books and Tracts which I have here printed, are all of them ſo well known, that there is little need to give a long account of any of them. I have choſen them out of a great variety, which ſuggeſted themſelves to my mind; but I have no expectation that every one ſhould be pleaſed with the choice which I have made. I once knew a Divine of the Church of *England*, of great eminence in it, and deſervedly eſteemed a good ſcholar, who, having accidentally taken up, in a friend's apartment, a book written by a Diſſenter, haſtily laid it down again, declaring, that "he never read diſſenting Divinity." I ought to apologize to Men of this Gentleman's opinion, for having made ſo much uſe of the works of the Diſſenters in this Collection; but the truth is, I did not at all conſider the quarter from whence the matter was taken, but whether it was good, and ſuited to my purpoſe; it was a circumſtance of utter indifference to me, whether it was of *Paul*, or *Apollos*, or *Cephas*, provided it was of *Chriſt*.

As this Collection will probably fall into the hands of ſome, who may wiſh to become acquainted with the ſort of Queſtions which are uſually maintained by thoſe who proceed to the degree of Bachelor or Doctor in Divinity, I thought it might be of ſervice to them, if I put down a few of thoſe which have been publicly diſputed on in the Theological Schools at *Cambridge*, within the laſt twenty-five or thirty years. I have not obſerved much order in arranging the queſtions: the reader will remark, that they are not all of equal importance; and, what he may judge more extraordinary, he will perceive, that the ſame doctrine is not maintained in them all. With regard to their importance, that muſt be expected to be variable, as they have been propoſed by men of very different talents and judgements. A ſameneſs of doctrine might indeed have been ſecured by the Profeſſor, without whoſe approbation no queſtion can be propoſed for diſputation: but I, for my part, (though ſome will probably blame me for it) have thought it more liberal and reaſonable to ſuffer this

contrariety, in ſome inſtances, to take place, than to oblige men to ſupport what they did not believe, or to preclude them from ſupporting what they did believe to be revealed in the Scriptures. Truth, I hope, has not ſuffered from this conduct: the mere acceptance of a queſtion is not underſtood to lay the Profeſſor under any obligation to ſupport it in the diſputation; if he thinks it not founded in the word of God, it is his duty to endeavour to ſhew the Reſpondent wherein he is miſtaken; and if he be not able to do that, ſtill there is no fear of error being eſtabliſhed by his inability to detect it, when it is conſidered before what a learned audience the diſputation is held; that the Reſpondent muſt either be a Bachelor of Divinity, or a Maſter of Arts, of four years ſtanding; and that three Maſters of Arts are the regular Opponents at every Divinity Act.

QUÆSTIONES

QUÆSTIONES QUÆDAM THEOLOGICÆ IN ACADEMIA CANTABRIGIENSI,

AB ANNO 1755 USQUE AD ANN. 1785,

Publicè disputatæ sub Præsidio S. Theologiæ Professorum Reg.

THOMÆ RUTHERFORTH, RICARDI WATSON.

QUÆST.

1 NON fuit Deo indignum mortis pœna sancire, ne primi hominum generis parentes unius cujusdam arboris fructu vescerentur.

2 Quod genus humanum sit laboribus et morti subjectum propter Adami peccatum, docetur in sacra pagina, nec est rationi contrarium.

3 Lapsum olim fuisse Angelorum patet ex sacris literis.

4 Verus erat serpens, per quem Eva decepta fuit; sed facultatibus, quæ ipsi non essent naturaliter insitæ, utebatur.

5 Universus serpentum cultus apud Gentiles ad confirmandam generalem interpretationem Diaboli sub serpentis forma latentis, prout in sacris Scripturis traditur, apte convenit atque inde derivari videtur.

6 Præscientia divina non erat causa lapsûs Adami.

7 Peccatum originis non est in imitatione Adami situm, sed est vitium et depravatio naturæ cujuslibet hominis ab Adamo propagati.

8 Lapsus Adami humanam naturam ad peccatum procliviorem reddidit.

9 Christus ante erat quam humana natura ab eo induebatur.

10 Non fuit indignum Filio Dei, hominum generis redimendi causa, humanam naturam induere.

11 Sacrificia jussu Dei principio sunt constituta.

12 Sacrificia principio constituta sunt ut essent typi mortis Christi.

13 Remissio peccatorum per Mediatorem et Sacrificium vicarium haud Deo est indigna.

14 Satisfactio pro peccatis hominum per mortem Christi non repugnat rationi.

15 Christum ipsum insontem, a Deo ad mortem datum esse pro sontibus, est credibile.

16 Quod traditur in sacris Scripturis de lapsu, redemptione, et futuro statu humani generis, non contradicit divinis perfectionibus.

17 Christiana revelatio rationis inventa superat rerum divinarum numero et certitudine.

18 Ratio sola nullam potest invenire conditionem, qua Deus velit hominibus dare peccatorum veniam et impunitatem.

19 Mors Christi est propria et plena satisfactio pro peccatis hominum.
20 Christus pro omnibus est mortuus.
21 Opera justorum vitam æternam per se non merentur.
22 Justitia Christi non sic hominibus imputatur, ut Dei judicio, ipsi censeantur eam præstitisse.
23 Coram Deo homo reputatur justus non propter meritum suum, sed propter meritum Jesu Christi, per fidem in ejus nomine.
24 Neque docent sacræ Scripturæ, neque articuli Ecclesiæ Anglicanæ, Christi justitiam nobis imputari in justificationem, sed fidem solam.
25 Paulus et Jacobus, quanquam de hominum justificatione verbis discrepare videantur, sententiis tamen non discrepant.
26 Justificatio nec sine fide et pœnitentia potest comparari, nec sine fidei et pœnitentiæ fructibus conservari.
27 Sacræ Scripturæ nullibi docent homines per fidem solam, bonorum operum fructibus carentem, supremo die justificandos.
28 Non est ea religionis Christi ratio, ut omnibus qui per eam justi apud Christum habeantur, certa salutis consequendæ fiducia in hac vita ingeneretur.
29 Fides Christiana nec cum ab hominibus suscipiatur, nec postquam suscepta sit, rationis usum aspernatur.
30 Fuit Moses verus Propheta a Deo missus.
31 Non fuit a Dei natura alienum Israelitas in populum sibi peculiarem eligere.
32 Moses spem vitæ æternæ Israelitis ostendit.
33 Distributio præmiorum et pœnarum temporalium quæ promissa fuit in libris Mosaicis, non erat pro meritis singulorum, nec in rebus administrandis ita erat acta.
34 Colligi non potest ex libris Mosaicis veteres Judæos æterna impiorum supplicia apud inferos pati.
35 Lex Mosaica non ideo Deo indigna censenda est, quia docet, Deum iniquitatem patrum in filios visitare.
36 Pœna talionis, quam lex Mosaica constituit, non fuit Deo legislatore indigna.
37 Licentia falsos Deos colendi non fuit Israelitis concessa.
38 Quod religio Judaica sit minus perfecta quam Christiana, id nihil probat contra divinam hujus et illius originem.
39 Israelitæ, spoliis Ægyptiorum auferendis, legem naturæ non violabant.
40 Non erat Deo indignum Canaanæos Israelitis exscindendos tradere.
41 Filia Jephthæ non fuit immolata.
42 Per legem Mosaicam Judæis non licuit pro victimis homines immolare.
43 Mandatum Abrahamo datum de immolatione Isaaci ad mortem Christi repræsentandam, haud alienum fuit divinæ sapientiæ aut justitiæ.
44 Non fuit Deo indignum diras Noachichas in Chamum conficere.
45 Nullæ in libro Psalmorum obnunciantur diræ, quæ ostendant eos non fuisse divino instinctu conscriptos.

46 Scriptura

6 Scriptura qua docemur "Deum cor Pharoahonis obfirmaſſe" nihil in ſe continet contra Dei benignitatem; quantum ex ratione aut revelatione tunc temporis Iſraelitis conceſſa colligi poteſt.

7 Hominibus qui ante diluvium vixerunt non licuit, eſcæ cauſa, animalia mactare.

8 Diluvium olim fuiſſe univerſale traditur in ſacra Scriptura, nec eſt hiſtoriæ vel civili vel naturali contrarium.

9 Veritas miraculorum, quæ in Veteri Teſtamento traduntur, cum idololatria moribuſque depravatis Judæorum conſtare poteſt.

10 Vaticinia quibus denunciavit Moſes, Paleſtinam ob inobedientiam Judæorum incultam ab iis ſterilemque futuram eſſe, hodie implentur.

11 Deus cum dixerit Iſraelitis, ſe prophetam Moſi ſimilem ex fratribus eorum eſſe excitaturum, hoc promiſſo ſolum Meſſiam deſignavit.

12 Aliquæ extant prædictiones, temporibus Moſis antiquiores, quæ ad Chriſtum ſunt referendæ.

13 Ex veterum prophetarum prædictionibus duo Meſſiæ, alter Davidis alter Joſephi filius, non erant in mundum venturi.

14 Sceptrum quod non ante erat a Juda diſceſſurum quam Shiloh advenerit, poteſtatem tribus regendæ deſignabat.

15 Iſraelitæ circumciſionis ritum ab Ægyptiis non receperunt.

16 Mare rubrum, Iſraelitis per illud tranſeuntibus, ad utrumque latus inſtar muri per miraculum ſtetit.

17 Confuſio linguarum Babylonica abſque Dei interventu explanari nequit.

18 Miracula ſunt idonea argumenta divinæ miſſionis.

19 Miracula fuiſſe olim edita ſatis probari poteſt ex humano teſtimonio.

20 Credibile eſt, Deum poſſe miracula facere, et interdum velle, et humano teſtimonio patet feciſſe.

21 Miracula non niſi a Deo, aut a Creatura particulari ejus juſſu et potentia agente, efficiuntur.

22 Magi Ægyptii vera coram Pharoahone miracula fecerunt.

23 Tentatio Chriſti in deſerto fuit viſio a Deo miſſa.

24 Tentatio Chriſti in deſerto non fuit viſio a Deo miſſa.

25 Nec per viſionem, nec per Diabolum, ſub qualibet externa forma, ſimiliter autem ac homo Chriſtus tentabatur.

26 Miracula in Evangeliis tradita hiſtoriam cum ipſis conjunctam adeo non infirmant, ut abſque illorum ope rerum geſtarum ſeries explicari nequeat.

27 Chriſti Apoſtolis vita defunctis credibile eſt ceſſaſſe miracula.

28 Extraordinaria ſpiritus ſancti dona ſtatim poſt tempora Apoſtolorum in Eccleſia Chriſtiana non ceſſaverunt.

29 Spiritus ſanctus eſt perſona.

30 Chriſtianorum eſt officium ſpiritum ſanctum colere et precari.

31 Dantur in Chriſto fidelibus certa quædam ſpiritus ſancti auxilia.

32 Fidei et virtutis adjumenta quæ homines a ſpiritu ſancto habent, eorum libertatem non tollunt.

73 Spiritus ſanctus interiora fidei ac virtutis adjumenta hominibus ita ſuppeditare ſolet, ut nullo animi tactu percipiantur.

74 Interiora quædam, Chriſtianæ Religionis ſuſcipiendæ ac præſtandæ adjumenta, hominum animis a ſpiritu ſancto ſubminiſtrantur.

75 Ad Theologiam Chriſtianam plene et perfecte intelligendam animo opus eſt literis doctriniſque imbuto.

76 Veritatis Chriſtianæ Religionis evidentia non a ſpiritu ſancto inſpiratur, ſed ex recto rationis uſu pendet.

77 Diverſa revelationum genera, pro varia rerum et hominum conditione, diverſis hominum moribus et ingeniis accommodantur.

78 Conſilium divinum de redimendo hominum genere, prout Chriſti tempora accedebant, gradatim aperiebatur.

79 In libris Veteris Teſtamenti prædicitur Chriſtiana Diſpenſatio.

80 Chriſtus et Apoſtoli abroganda lege Moſaica de divina legiſlatoris auctoritate non detrahunt.

81 Religio quam Chriſtus humano generi tradidit non continetur lege naturali denuo promulganda.

82 Non eſt res indifferens quam quiſque religionem colat.

83 Error in doctrinis religionis ſpeculativis non eſt innocens.

84 Poſt Canonem Scripturæ conſignatum novæ revelationes non ſunt expectandæ.

85 Meſſias per veteres prophetas Judæis promiſſus non futurus erat rex terreſtris.

86 Veritas Chriſtianæ revelationis patet ex impletione prædictionum veterum prophetarum.

87 Jeſus Nazarenus fuit verus Meſſias a Deo promiſſus.

88 Prædictiones veterum prophetarum non ita citantur in Novo Teſtamento, quaſi ſingulæ ſeorſim a cæteris oſtenderent Jeſum eſſe Meſſiam.

89 Clades Hieroſolymitana et ſtatus populi Judaici hodiernus pro magno argumento eſt veritatis Chriſtianæ Religionis.

90 Deus nulla lege aut vaticinatione ſignificavit, ſe nolle Judæorum quenquam in ullam Chriſtianorum civitatem civem adſcriptitium recipi.

91 Propagatio fidei Chriſtianæ ante Conſtantini tempora probat auctoritatem ejus divinam.

92 Converſio Divi Pauli ortum ſuum non debuit ſuperſtitioni, ſed miraculis a Deo editis et veritati Chriſtianæ Religionis.

93 Ex vita et moribus Chriſti et Apoſtolorum Chriſtianæ religionis veritas probari poteſt.

94 Miracula Chriſti una cum doctrina probant divinam ejus miſſionem.

95 Miracula Chriſti ipſa per ſe valent ad probandam divinam ejus miſſionem.

96 Ad ſtabiliendam revelationis doctrinam non ſatis valet interna evidentia.

97 Diſſenſiones Chriſtianorum, de rebus quæ in religione Chriſtiana contineantur, non oſtendunt religionem ipſam eſſe falſam.

98 Variantes lectiones et menda auctoritatem ſacræ Scripturæ non labefactant in rebus ad fidem et mores ſpectantibus.

99 Diſſenſiones

99 Dissensiones inter Apostolos de circumcisione gentium divinam Christianæ religionis auctoritatem non impugnant.
100 Cæteri Apostoli cum Paulo consentiebant, Judæos sine obtemperanda lege Mosaica posse per Christum salutem consequi.
101 Auctoritas testimonii quo Religio Christi confirmatur temporum longinquitate non imminuta est.
102 Nihil in Evangelio Matthæi traditur ex quo probari possit, id scriptum fuisse post excidium Hierosolymitanum.
103 Apostoli nihil tradiderunt, ex quo intelligamus credidisse eos mundum suis temporibus finem fuisse habiturum.
104 Religio Christiana non ideo vituperanda est quod nihil de amicitia privata vel de amore patriæ præscripserit.
105 Divina Christianæ religionis auctoritas non imminuitur ex eo quod nondum universis innotuit.
106 Jesuitæ Christi causam male agunt tolerando ritus et ceremonias, quas apud Sinas in honorem Confusii, parentum, cæterorumque majorum mos est celebrare.
107 Magistratui jus non competit subditos coercendi ad cultum illum divinum celebrandum, lege licet stabilitum, quem ipsi vel rationi vel revelationi haud consentaneum censent.
108 Non est libertati Christianæ alienum ut in rebus indifferentibus ad cultum Dei spectantibus ecclesia auctoritatem habeat.
109 In fidei controversiis nulla datur ecclesiæ auctoritas quæ jus tollit privati judicii.
110 Christianorum hominum qui se ad civitatis suæ religionem conformare nolint, jus nullum violatur si e muneribus civilibus lege lata excludantur.
111 Indulgentia Pontificiis nuper concessa nec rationi, nec sacris literis, nec reipublicæ saluti repugnat.
112 Vis externa non est hominibus adhibenda propter religionem quam profitentur.
113 Unaquæque ecclesia jure postulare potest, ut ii quibus publice docendi munus committat, religionis Christianæ institutionibus, ejus auctoritate comprobatis, assentiant.
114 Et rationi et sacris Scripturis consentaneum est ut homines ecclesiastici potestati civili subjiciantur.
115 Non est Christianis interdictum, ut quavis de causa fidem suam ullo jurejurando ne astringant.
116 Nulla in civilibus hominum officiis mutatio est facta per Christi religionem.
117 Non est a Christi religione alienum civili auctoritate recipi ac stabiliri.
118 Christiana religio incrementa sua in primis ecclesiæ sæculis non debuit causis, ut vocantur, secundis, sed partim internæ suæ excellentiæ, partim auctoris sui potestati divinæ.
119 Perspicuitas sacrorum librorum non efficit ut supervacaneum sit homines ad religionem Christi instituere.
120 Ministris ecclesiæ debetur aliquod stipendium.
121 Forma regiminis in ecclesia Anglicana constituti, et verbo Dei et ecclesiæ primitivæ usu sancitur.

122 Ecclesiastici regiminis in Anglia et in Scotia constituti, neutra forma, aut juri hominum naturali aut verbo Dei repugnat.
123 A Christi et Apostolorum institutione patet, ordinem fuisse Episcopatus a Presbyteriatu diversum, eoque superiorem.
124 Statæ precum formulæ sunt maxime conformes sacris Scripturis et ecclesiæ primitivæ praxi.
125 Liturgiæ in diversis ecclesiis diversæ, modo sacris literis haud adversentur, non sunt improbandæ.
126 Precatio Dominica est formula quam omnes Christi discipuli in Deo precando adhibere debent.
127 Preces et publicæ et privatæ tantum in nomine Christi sunt peragendæ.
128 Creaturam cultu religioso prosequi non licet.
129 E Stephani martyris moribundi precibus patet Jesum Christum esse Deum.
130 Christus summo cultu, quem Deo Patri reddimus, colendus est.
131 Christus quà Mediator novi fœderis est adæquatum objectum cultus religiosi.
132 Fidei in tres personas ejusdem substantiæ, potentiæ, et æternitatis, Patrem, Filium, et Spiritum Sanctum, unius Dei cultus non repugnat.
133 Mysteria revelationis non ostendunt eam non esse a Deo traditam.
134 Deo indignum non fuit ut instituta positiva in religione traderet.
135 Positiva religionis præcepta non minus obligant quam moralia.
136 Duo tantum novi fœderis sacramenta instituit Christus.
137 Confirmatio, pœnitentia, ordo, matrimonium, et extrema unctio pro sacramentis Evangelicis non sunt habenda.
138 Cœna Dominica Epuli sacrificalis rationem non habet.
139 Nullum in missa fit sacrificium quo peccata viventium ac mortuorum expiantur.
140 Animus Christianus necessario præcedit dignam Eucharistiæ perceptionem.
141 Eucharistia usque ad secundum Christi adventum ab ejus discipulis celebrari debet.
142 Calix Laicis non est denegandus.
143 Doctrina pontificiorum de transubstantiatione nec rationi, nec sensuum testimonio, nec sacris Scripturis consentaneum est.
144 Transubstantiatio non est æque credibilis ac Trinitas personarum in una essentia.
145 Leges Anglicanæ quæ vetant munera reipublicæ cuiquam deferri qui nolit Eucharistiam percipere juxta ecclesiæ Anglicanæ præscriptum Eucharistiæ religionem non polluunt.
146 Recte in ecclesia Anglicana sancitur ne quis nisi flexis genubus cœnam Domini capiat.
147 Religio Christiana postulat ut qui eam suscipiant aqua baptizentur.
148 Baptismus parvulorum omnino in ecclesia retinendus est, ut qui cum Christi institutione optime conveniat.
149 Lex Christi non postulat ut omnes qui baptizentur in aquam immergantur.

150 Aquæ

150 Aquæ aſperſio ſeu affuſio in baptiſmate adminiſtrando non irritum reddit ſacramentum.
151 Omne peccatum quod Chriſtiani poſt baptiſmum committant, ſi pœnitendo corrigatur, eos a ſalute non excludit.
152 Sabbatum erat, ante legem per Moſem traditam, a Deo conſtitutum.
153 Præcepta Moſaica de modo obſervandi Sabbatum Chriſtianos non obligant.
154 Sabbatum ab ultimo die ſeptimanæ recte eſt inter Chriſtianos ad primum tranſlatum.
155 Ad diem Dominicum religioſe obſervandum cuncti Chriſtiani tenentur.
156 Doctrina abſolutæ prædeſtinationis cum divinis pugnat attributis.
157 Doctrina prædeſtinationis et electionis ad futurum aut miſeriæ aut felicitatis ſtatum ex ſacra Scriptura colligi nequit.
158 Prædeſtinatio Paulina tota ſpectat ad Gentium vocationem.
159 In libris novi fœderis nihil de prædeſtinatione traditur quod diligentiam hominum in officiis præſtandis jure imminuat.
160 Sacræ Scripturæ nullibi docent eos qui de Chriſto nunquam audiverunt non poſſe ſalutem æternam conſequi.
161 Salus noſtra in fide in Chriſtum redemptorem conſiſtit.
162 Doctrina eccleſiæ pontificiæ de purgatorio nullis vel ſacræ Scripturæ vel rationis nititur fundamentis.
163 Sanctorum et Angelorum cultus et invocatio apud pontificios eſt idololatria.
164 Ipſe jejunandi actus per ſe et ſua natura vim et rationem religionis non habet.
165 Confeſſio privata ſacerdoti facta non eſt ad ſalutem neceſſaria.
166 Plebi et indoctis ſacrorum librorum lectio non eſt interdicenda.
167 Nec Petrus nec Pontifex Romanus conſtitutus fuit a Chriſto totius eccleſiæ monarcha.
168 In ſacris libris continentur omnia quæ ſunt ad ſalutem neceſſaria.
169 Sacra Scriptura eſt unica Chriſtianæ fidei norma.
170 Nullus eſt in eccleſia judex infallibilis controverſiarum.
171 Characteres hominis peccati in poſteriore Paulina ad Theſſalonicenſes epiſtola expreſſi Pontifici Romano apprime conveniunt.
172 Pars hiſtorica Novi Teſtamenti quæ continet eventus divinam opem non expoſcentes jure fidem noſtram vindicat.
173 Datur ſtatus medius inter mortem et reſurrectionem.
174 Non datur ſtatus medius inter mortem et reſurrectionem.
175 Nec felicitas beatorum perfecta nec miſeria impiorum extrema erit ante reſurrectionem et generale judicium.
176 Jobi de vindice ſuo videndo fiducia ad ſpem vitæ futuræ referenda eſt.
177 Reſurrectio Chriſti probatur teſtibus fide dignis.
178 Reſurrectio mortuorum patet ex parabola Divitis ac Lazari.
179 Anima a corpore ſoluta in ſtatu ſeparato manet ad reſurrectionem.
180 Reſurrectio quæ patefacta et promiſſa eſt in Evangelio eſt reſurrectio corporis.
181 Æterna felicitas non patet niſi ex revelatione.

182 Pœnæ

182 Pœnæ improborum erunt æternæ.
183 Beatos in ſtatu gloriæ ſe mutuo agnituros eſſe, nec ratione nec ſacris Scripturis refragatur.
184 Ex Evangeliſtarum et Apoſtolorum ſcriptis minime patet qui in hiſtoriolis ſuis ſervari dicuntur eos ideo vitam æternam conſecuturos.
185 Chriſtus vera dæmonia ejecit.
186 Oraculorum reſponſa antiquitus reddita non a ſacerdotum præſtigiis aut humano quolibet artificio, ſed a dæmonum quos Deus Ethnicos illudere paſſus eſt malignitate.
187 Diaconi non ad civile tantum, ſed ad ſacrum etiam munus initio ſunt conſtituti.
188 Bona Chriſtianorum non ſunt omnibus communia.
189 Nec peccavit Chriſtus, nec peccare potuit.
190 Non neceſſitate quadam impulſus, ſed conſilio ſuo obſecutus Judas, Chriſtum in pontificum manus tradidit.
191 Particularis providentiæ doctrina cum ratione et ſacris Scripturis conſonat.
192 Præcepta de charitate inimicorum quæ in ſacris libris traduntur, naturæ hominum apte conveniunt.
193 Licet ſub novo fœdere Chriſtianis ſanguine veſci.
194 Epiſtola ad Hebræos a Paulo ſcripta eſt.
195 Mons Ebal fuit, in quo Iſraelitæ a Deo juſſi ſunt aram extruere poſtquam Jordanem tranſiiſſent.
196 Judæi recte recuſarunt ne Samaritani templum Dei ſecum ædificarent.
197 Apoſtoli omnes intellexerunt linguas Sancti Spiritus afflatu.
198 Chriſti bene merita afficiunt pœnitentes et probos, non impœnitentes et reprobos.
199 Præcepta Evangelii quæ ad mores ſpectant tendunt ad humanam felicitatem promovendam.
200 Chriſtus in mundum venit ut homines non ſolum doceret, ſed redimeret.

Theſe Queſtions may be ſufficient to give the Reader ſome notion of the Subjects which have of late engaged the attention of the Diſputants in the Divinity Schools at Cambridge. I will afford him an opportunity of contraſting our labours with thoſe of our Predeceſſors, without taking upon me to determine whether we ſhall derive credit or diſhonour from the compariſon. If he ſhould think that we have in ſome inſtances a more enlarged view of the Chriſtian ſyſtem, and more liberal notions concerning the manner in which diſſentients from our particular mode of faith and worſhip ought to be treated than they had, I will take the liberty to ſay, that there is room for improvement in both theſe points.

In 1634 were publiſhed at Cambridge——*Determinationes Quæſtionum quarundam Theologicarum, in Academia Cantabrigienſi publicè diſputatarum*——by Doctor DAVENANT, then Biſhop of Saliſbury, and formerly Lady Margaret's Profeſſor of Divinity.

INDEX QUÆSTIONUM.

QUÆST.

1 CONCUPISCENTIA in renatis eſt peccatum.
2. Papiſtarum preces pro defunctis ſunt inanes.
3 Verè credentes certi eſſe poſſunt de ſua ſalute.
4 Nulla eſt temporalis Papæ poteſtas ſuper reges in ordine ad bonum ſpirituale.
5 Infallibilis determinatio fidei non eſt annexa cathedræ Papali.
6 Cæca Jeſuitarum obedientia eſt illicita.
7 Non licet Proteſtanti ſalva conſcientia miſſæ intereſſe.
8 Opera pœnalia non ſunt divinæ juſtitiæ ſatisfactoria.
9 Non datur liberum arbitrium in non renatis, ad bonum ſpirituale.
10 Opera renatorum labe peccati ſunt inquinata.
11 Civilis juriſdictio jure conceditur perſonis eccleſiaſticis.
12 Renuente magiſtratu, non licet populo reformationem eccleſiæ moliri.
13 Miſſa pontificia non eſt ſacrificium propitiatorium pro vivis et mortuis.
14 Antiqui Patres non meruerunt Chriſti incarnationem, nec aliquas ejus circumſtantias.
15 Tota poteſtas ſacerdotum eſt ſpiritualis.
16 Pronitas ad malum non fluit ex principiis integræ naturæ.
17 Jeſuitici pontificii non poſſunt eſſe boni ſubditi.
18 Cultus religioſus creaturæ eſt idololatria.
19 Rex in regno ſuo eſt minor ſolo Deo.
20 Eccleſia Anglicana juſtiſſime obligat ad ceremonias.
21 Eccleſia Romana eſt apoſtatica.
22 Decretum non tollit libertatem.
23 Sacramenta non conferunt gratiam ex opere operato.
24 In eſſentia divina nec aliud nec accidens.
25 Præſcientia divina non erat cauſa lapſus humani.
26 Subjectum divinæ prædeſtinationis eſt homo lapſus.
27 Papiſtæ tenentur intereſſe ſacris Proteſtantium.
28 Papæ juriſdictio non eſt univerſalis.
29 Fides implicita non eſt ſalutifera.
30 Dominium temporale non fundatur in gratia.
31 Omne peccatum eſt ſua natura mortiferum.
32 Conſilia quæ vocantur Evangelica, habent quandoque vim præcepti.

33 Remiſſa

33 Remissa culpa remittitur pœna.
34 Nemo potest de congruo mereri primam gratiam divinam.
35 Ecclesia invisibilis non est Idea Platonica.
36 Christi victima sola vere expiatoria.
37 Fides justificans est fiducia in Christum mediatorem.
38 Fides justificans non potest a charitate disjungi.
39 Laici non sunt arcendi a lectione Scripturarum.
40 Superbia fuit primum peccatum Angelorum.
41 Publica Religionis exercitia sunt lingua vulgari peragenda.
42 Diversitas graduum in ministris Evangelicis, verbo Dei non repugnat.
43 Cœlibatus non est necessario sacris ordinibus annexus.
44 Sancti non sunt invocandi.
45 Ignorantia non excusat peccatum.
46 Sancta ecclesia Catholica quam credimus, ex solis constat electis.
47 Nec Petrus nec Pontifex Romanus constitutus fuit a Christo ecclesiæ totius monarcha.
48 Censura ecclesiastica non tollit vincula officiorum.
49 Non datur omnibus auxilium sufficiens ad salutem.
50 Ecclesia Romana injuste calicem Laicis ademit.

Doctor TUCKNEY was elected Regius Professor of Divinity in the University of Cambridge in 1655; his *Prælectiones Theologicæ, necnon Determinationes Quæstionum variarum insignium in Scholis Academicis Cantabrigiensibus habitæ*——were published at Amsterdam in 1679.

QUÆSTIONES DETERMINATÆ.

1 MAGISTRATUM gerere non repugnat Christi institutis.
2 Humana Christi natura non est ex unione hypostatica Divinarum proprietatum particeps.
3 Religio non est vi et armis propaganda.
4 Infallibilitas nulli competit creaturæ.
5 Electio est prorsus gratuita.
6 Omne peccatum est sua natura mortale.
7 Ad ministerium ecclesiæ suscipiendum ordinarie requiritur legitima vocatio.
8 Christiano licet ex intuitu mercedis operari.
9 Meritum Papisticum ex S. Scriptura non probatur.
10 Purgatorium Papisticum est fictitium.
11 Pœnæ propter peccatum æternæ non sunt iniquæ.
12 Ψυχοπαννυχια nec ratione fundatur nec Scriptura.
13 Peccata præterita et futura non simul remittuntur.
14 Fraudes quæ vocantur piæ sunt illicitæ.
15 Nullus assensus constituit rationem fidei justificantis.

6 Ad redemptionis noſtræ λυτρον tam activa quam paſſiva Chriſti ſpectat obedientia.
7 Deus reputat pro juſtis non niſi reverà juſtos.
8 Rectitudo primi parentis non fuit donum ſupernaturale.
9 Beati in ſtatu gloriæ ſe mutuo ſunt agnituri.
0 Αυτοφωια non eſt licita.
1 Vere fideles certi eſſe poſſunt de ſalute.
2 Credentes tenentur ad obedientiam legis.
3 Dominium temporale non fundatur in gratia.
4 Cognitio ſana neceſſario credendorum eſt pars religionis eſſentialis.
5 Regnum Chriſti perſonale in terris non eſt expectandum.
6 Miniſtris conjugium non eſt interdicendum.
7 Intellectus vi ſola nativi luminis non percipit ſalutariter doctrinam Evangelii.
8 Fides juſtificans a bonis operibus ſejungi nequit.
9 Præcepta Evangelica de vita inſtituenda ſunt rectæ rationi conſentanea.
0 Renati in hac vita non poſſunt perfecte legem Dei adimplere.
1 Externus judex infallibilis in controverſiis fidei, nec datur, nec requiritur in eccleſia.
2 Bona opera ſunt neceſſaria ad ſalutem.
3 Concupiſcentia in renatis eſt peccatum.
4 Quintum Danielis imperium non reſtat adhuc expectandum.
5 Interna Dei illuminatio non tollit uſum neceſſarium miniſterii Evangelici.
6 Officia eccleſiaſtica ſunt lingua vulgo nota celebranda.
7 Verbum Dei externum eſt ordinarium medium converſionis ad ſalutem.
8 Indulgentiæ pontificiæ non nituntur verbo divino.
9 Chriſtus eſt Patri ὁμοούσιος.
0 Status in quo homo nec juſtus ſit nec injuſtus non datur.
1 Jacobi ſententia de juſtificatione non eſt adverſaria Paulinæ.
2 Uſura legitima non eſt illicita.
3 Sacrificia ſub et ante Moſaicam œconomiam typi fuerunt Jeſu Chriſti.
4 Divortium matrimoniale non ſolvit vinculum.
5 Culpa remiſſa non retinetur pœna.
6 Non licet gladio animadvertere in hæreticos.
7 Promulgatio eſt de eſſentia legis divinæ.
8 Principes nulli terreno foro ſunt obnoxii.
9 Externa fidei profeſſio dat jus ad ſacramenta.
0 Lectio S. Scripturæ non eſt interdicenda Laicis.
1 Characteres Antichriſti in Scriptura expreſſi præcipue conveniunt pontifici Romano.
2 Satisfactio Chriſti pro peccatis eſt congrua juſtitiæ et gratiæ divinæ.

I once intended to have digeſted the whole of Theology into a connected ſeries of propoſitions, with references to ſuch Authors, ancient and modern, as had treated the affirmative and negative ſide of each, with the greateſt clearneſs and preciſion.

The mere enunciation of a propoſition conveys a degree of uſeful knowledge; and the various queſtions which ſuggeſt themſelves on every important ſubject in Divinity might be ſtated with ſuch preciſion, and made ſo to depend on each other, that they would comprehend in a ſhort compaſs the marrow of many a bulky Syſtem, and would at the ſame time give ſuch a regular and complete view of the whole ſubject, as conſtitutes the chief utility of Syſtematic Treatiſes. I had made ſome little progreſs in this work, when I was ſeized with a diſorder, three years ago, that has rendered me unequal to the exertions which its completion would require. If any perſon ſhould be induced to undertake a work of this nature, he will find his endeavours much aſſiſted by the *Aphoriſmi per univerſam Theologiam Breviores*, of *Cocceius*, and by his Aphoriſms *contra Socinianos* et *contra Pontificios*; by the *Syllabus Quæſtionum præcipuarum, quæ inter Socinianos reliquosque Eccleſiæ reformatæ, ſimul ac Pontificiæ Theologos ventilantur*, publiſhed in Biſhop Barlow's Remains; by a ſmall tract intitled *Quæſtiones præcipuæ, eæque nude propoſitæ, de Univerſa Doctrina Chriſtianorum*, Bremæ 1617; by the *Summa Theologica* of *Thomas Aquinas*; for notwithſtanding the ridicule which uſually, in theſe days, attends the mere mention of the *Angelic* Doctor, I will venture to affirm, that in that work there are, mixed indeed with many difficult ſubtleties and perverſe interpretations of the Scripture, not a few Theological queſtions of great moment ſtated with clearneſs and judgment; by *Doddridge's Lectures*; by the *Theſes Theologicæ* of *Voſſius*, and of *Le Blanc*; by the *Syntagma Theſium in Academia Salmurienſi diſputatarum*; by the *Works* of *Epiſcopius*, *Limborch*, *Turretin*, *Curcellæus*, *Buddæus*, *Calvin*, *Arminius*, *Beckius*; and by our Engliſh Divines, of whom it may be ſaid in general, that they have illuſtrated particular doctrines of Chriſtianity with more ſtrength of argument, and perſpicuity of language, than are to be met with in the writings of the Divines of any other nation.

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PREFACE.

THE Reader is here presented with the plan which Dr. TAYLOR followed, in leading his pupils to a just and rational acquaintance with the principles of Religion, founded upon an accurate knowledge of the Scriptures.

The importance of this service, and his accountableness in a great measure for the event, were considerations of the last moment, and caused him to compose, and deliver his academical instructions with the utmost circumspection. To his own judgment, after the strictest revisal, the principles here advanced, appeared just and scriptural; but he did not therefore presume they were absolutely free from error; much less did he think himself authorized, as a public tutor, to impose his sentiments on young minds with an overbearing hand. That he might do justice to his pupils, and himself, he always prefaced his lectures with the following solemn CHARGE, which does honor to the Author, and affords a noble precedent to seminaries of learning.

I. "I DO solemnly charge you, in the name of the God of Truth, and of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life, and before whose judgment-seat you must in no long time appear, that in all your studies and inquiries of a religious nature, present or future, you do constantly, carefully, impartially, and conscientiously attend to evidence, as it lies in the holy Scriptures, or in the nature of things, and the dictates of reason; cautiously guarding against the sallies of imagination, and the fallacy of ill-grounded conjecture."

II.—"That you admit, embrace, or assent to no principle, or sentiment, by me taught or advanced, but only so far as it shall appear to you to be supported and justified by proper evidence from Revelation, or the reason of things."

III.—"That, if at any time hereafter, any principle or sentiment, by me taught or advanced, or by you admitted and embraced, shall, upon impartial and faithful examination, appear to you to be dubious or false, you either suspect, or totally reject such principle or sentiment."

IV.—" That you keep your mind always open to evidence.—That you labour to baniſh from your breaſt all prejudice, preposſeſſion, and party-zeal.—That you ſtudy to live in peace and love with all your fellow-chriſtians, and that you ſteadily aſſert for yourſelf, and freely allow to others, the unalienable rights of judgment and conſcience."

Is it poſſible to adjuſt the terms between a tutor and his pupils more equitably? But it muſt here be obſerved, that Dr. TAYLOR ever meant, the liberty he claimed for himſelf, and allowed to others, ſhould be directed by a ſerious frame of mind, and a real deſire to promote practical religion. The enlarged view he had of divine things penetrated his own heart, and had a manifeſt influence over his practice. He laboured to explain and vindicate the doctrines of Revelation for this reaſon, that he might moſt effectually ſerve the cauſe of vital Religion.

It were to be wiſhed, that thoſe who are ſtudents for the miniſtry, who chooſe to conſult his writings, may imbibe the ſame ſpirit of genuine piety. This will be a never-failing ſource of weight and credit: and without it, other qualifications will be inſufficient for religious improvement.

The Doctor's whole life being devoted to an impartial ſtudy of the Scriptures, not by way of ſpeculation and amuſement, but for the moſt valuable purpoſes to himſelf and others, it is no wonder to find him ſo earneſtly recommending them to the ſerious attention of Chriſtians. This is the important ſubject of thoſe chapters, which immediately follow the Scheme of SCRIPTURE DIVINITY.

The Editor ſubmits the whole (as the Author would have done) to the candor of every intelligent Reader; deſiring that what is here advanced, may be regarded no further than ſhall appear conformable to truth and Scripture, in ſubſerviency to the beſt intereſt of Mankind.

A SCHEME

A

SCHEME

OF

CRIPTURE-DIVINITY, &c.

CHAP. I.

Of Christian Theology.

CHRISTIAN Theology, or Divinity, is the ſcience which, from Revelation, teacheth the knowledge of God, namely, his ture and perfections, his relations to us, his ways and diſpenſations, will with reſpect to our actions, and his purpoſes with reſpect to our ng; in order to form in our minds right principles, for our direction d comfort, and in our converſation right practice for ſecuring his our and bleſſing.

In natural religion we take our proofs from the natures of things as ceived, conſidered, and compared by the human mind; but now we ance upon the authority and ſenſe of writings and books; I mean, Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Teſtaments, acknowledged the whole Chriſtian world as a true revelation from God, and as the ndard of faith and doctrine.

That God would reveal to us, by ſuch ways as he in his wiſdom geth moſt proper, ſuch things as are needful for us to know and to for the improvement and happineſs of our nature, is perfectly eeable to his wiſdom and goodneſs, who is our Father, and delighteth our well-being; and is alſo perfectly ſuitable to our circumſtances, nankind are ignorant and weak, and very liable to error and decep-. It is conſonant to the nature of things, that a father ſhould ruct his child, and that perſons of knowledge and learning ſhould h the ignorant. How much more that God, whoſe underſtanding nfinite, and without whom we can know nothing at all, ſhould h and inſtruct us all!

And that his inſtructions ſhould be conſigned to writing, is alſo very nd proper; as this, in fact, is the ſureſt method of preſerving them

in the world. Tradition from one generation to another is no safe conveyance. The experiment hath been sufficiently tried in the ages before the flood; wherein, though tradition was then greatly favoured by the longevity of mankind, yet we find, that both the Religion of Nature and traditionary Revelation were both so far lost, that in the space of 1656 years *the earth was filled with violence——for all flesh had corrupted his way upon earth.* Gen. vi. 11, 12. And both would have been entirely lost, had not God in an extraordinary manner interposed. Likewise after the flood, notwithstanding any tradition from *Noah*, idolatry soon overspread the nations, and rendered it expedient for God to devise a new constitution, to prevent a second universal corruption and apostacy. And so false and faithless is Tradition, that for many ages in the Jewish nation, and for many ages under the Gospel, Tradition was, and still is, so far opposed to Revelation, as to obscure and disparage it, and make the commandment of God therein of no effect. Insomuch, that had not a written Revelation by Divine Providence been introduced into the world, and preserved in it, true Religion would have been banished out of it.

The benefit of Revelation is very great: but then it must be faithfully used; otherwise it will be turned against itself, and made the patron of Falsehood and Delusion. Which, in fact, hath been the case. Men, either weak or wicked, have perverted the Scriptures, and reduced them to a subserviency to either their lusts, or preconceived opinions. The latter was remarkably the case in the first ages of Christianity. When any of the Philosophers were converted to the Christian Profession, they generally brought along with them the schemes and notions of the particular sects to which they were attached; those influenced their minds in the study of the Scriptures, and inclined them to wrest the Scriptures into a consistency with their preconceived opinions. Hence it is, that many notions inconsistent with the word of God, and with each other, have been handed down to us from the earliest times under the sacred character of sound Christian Doctrine. And in our own times, we find men pleading the authority of Scripture for a variety of opposite and contradictory sentiments, which therefore cannot all of them be founded upon Scripture.

For the Holy Scriptures, being a Revelation from God, the most perfect and invariable standard of Truth, though written by different persons, living in remote ages, during the space of about 1500 years, from *Moses* to *John*, who wrote the Revelation; yet, being a Revelation from God, must be perfectly consistent in all their parts and principles, views and sentiments, expreſt in uniformity of language. For if the language were multiform and various, the sense would necessarily be obscure, and the understanding confounded, and so the ends of Revelation would be defeated. And if, notwithstanding the great changes in customs, dispositions, interests, and religious sentiments, which must, and actually did, happen in so long a tract of time, we do find, that one consistent scheme, in one consistent uniform language, is carried on in all the writings, which compose the Scriptures, we may strongly conclude, that they are a Revelation from God; not the produce of human wisdom, which could never in ages so remote, and for the greatest part so illiterate, have combined

ined to carry on a regular, uniform ſcheme of religious principles and entiments, in the ſame language or modes of expreſſion; but the inſpiation or dictates of one Spirit, the Spirit of God. Hence it follows,

I. That in explaining the Scriptures, conſiſtency of ſenſe and principles ought to be ſupported in all the ſeveral parts thereof; and that, any part be ſo interpreted as to claſh with any other, we may be ſure ach interpretation cannot be juſtified. Nor can it otherwiſe be rectified, han by faithfully comparing Scripture with Scripture, and bringing hat may ſeem to be obſcure into a conſiſtency with what is plain and vident.

II. The ſenſe of Scripture can no otherwiſe be underſtood, than by nderſtanding the force and import of Scriptural language. And the orce and import of Scriptural language can be ſettled in no method more uthentic, than by collating the ſeveral paſſages in which any phraſe or xpreſſion occurs. Thus, in every view, Scripture is the beſt interpreter f Scripture.

III. Figurative expreſſions ſhould be carefully diſtinguiſhed from thoſe hat are literal; and *vice verſa*. The oriental, and conſequently the criptural tropes and figures of ſpeech, are very bold, and different from he European.

IV. Single ſentences are not to be detached from the places where ey ſtand, but to be taken in connexion with the whole diſcourſe. The ccaſion, coherence, and connexion of the writing, the argument that carrying on, the ſcope and intent of the paragraph, are to be carefully tended to.

V. We ſhould always interpret Scripture in a ſenſe conſiſtent with he laws of natural religion; or with the known perfections of God, nd the notions of right and wrong, good and evil, which are diſcoverble in the works of creation, and in the preſent conſtitution of things. The language of Nature is moſt certainly the language of God, the ſole uthor of Nature. And however the Divine Wiſdom may diverſify the rcumſtances of ſupernatural Revelation, yet the law of Nature, as it founded in the unchangeable natures of things, muſt be the baſis and round-work of every conſtitution of religion, which God had erected. Whence it follows, that the ſtudy and knowledge of natural Religion is neceſſary introduction to the ſtudy and right underſtanding of Revelaon. And we may further conclude that ſupernatural Revelation, in l its parts and principles, as it certainly is, ſo it always ſhould be, inrpreted and underſtood in perfect harmony with natural Religion, or e dictates of Reaſon.

But miſtake me not; I do not mean, that the law or religion of Nare is commenſurate to Revelation; or, that nothing is to be admitted Revelation, but what is diſcoverable by the light of Nature, or by uman Reaſon. So far from that, that the whole of Revelation, prorly ſo called, could never have been diſcovered by human Reaſon. nd therefore in matters of pure Revelation, it is a very falſe and fallaous way to begin firſt with what our Reaſon may dictate and diſcover; ecauſe our Reaſon, unaſſiſted by Revelation, in ſuch caſes, can diſcover

nothing at all. For instance, the consequences of *Adam*'s transgression upon his posterity; the covenant made with *Abraham*; the nature and mission of the Son of God; the grant of blessings, and of eternal life by him. Concerning those things, we could have known nothing at all, had not God revealed them to us. And in such matters of pure Revelation, the first thing we have to do, is to inquire, not what human Reason can discover, but what God has discovered, and declared in Scripture. But at the same time it is true, that God hath discovered nothing in Scripture inconsistent with what he has discovered in the nature of things exposed to the view of all mankind. And therefore, if we understand any thing in revealed religion, in a sense contradictory to natural religion, or to the known perfections of God, and the common notions of good and evil, which he hath written upon all our hearts, we may be sure we are in an error, and mistake the sense of Revelation.

I. He who would effectually study the word of God, ought, above all things, to be deeply sensible of the infinite value of true knowledge and wisdom; and how absolutely necessary it is to his eternal happiness, to cultivate and improve his intellectual powers, in the use of all those means which God hath put into his hands. The Scriptures are given us, not for amusement, or mere speculation, in perusing the curious remains of antiquity, the language, manners, and Theology of some celebrated ancients; but they are all, from beginning to end, pointed directly at our hearts and lives, to make us wise unto salvation. There we find every rule of the most consummate wisdom, and every principle of truth and comfort; and the whole is designed to refine our nature into its proper excellence, to guide us into the paths of purity, peace, and righteousness; to make us happy in ourselves, and a blessing to all about us; and finally to qualify us for the full enjoyment of God for ever.

But if we are cold and indifferent to any attainments in true wisdom; if we choose to dream, or jest and trifle away the important season of life, despising the glorious advantages we enjoy, while we eagerly pursue the low and transitory things of this world, in neglect of ourselves, of God, and immortality, of all that is truly great and good and excellent, we shall receive little or no advantage from any explications of the Holy Scriptures. We shall not value or relish them, we can have no ground to expect the divine blessing to assist our studies, but have reason to fear we shall be left to ourselves, to wander from God, from truth, and life, in deplorable ignorance and folly. Attend, therefore, to the voice of Divine Wisdom, *Prov.* ii. 1, &c. *My son, if thou will receive my words, and hide my commandments within thee,* [lay them up as a treasure תצפן in thy heart] *so that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart unto understanding; yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding* [as we do for those things, which we most of all desire, and most of all stand in need of]: *If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures* [as covetous men seek money, and ransack the whole world for the treasures, in which they delight: If thus you value, and study to advance the improvement of your minds in knowledge and wisdom]: *Then shalt thou understand the fear*

fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God [which of all understanding is infinitely the most excellent].

II. But this sense of the value of Divine Knowledge, and this desire to obtain it, must be understood in a connexion with a sincere endeavour to live agreeably to it. For should a person, under the greatest advantages of learning, and with the utmost assiduity study the Scriptures, he will be, after all, but a poor proficient in Divine Knowledge, if he do not bring it home to his heart, and reduce it to practice. It is not speculation, but practice and experience, which renders a man truly skilful in any business. So in Religion, no man can be truly wise and knowing, but he who liveth wisely and virtuously. *If ye continue in my word*, (saith our Lord, *Joh.* viii. 31.) *then shall ye know the truth, and the truth shall make you free* [from the darkness of ignorance and error, and the servitude of absurd lusts and passions]. *Joh.* vii. 27. *If any man will do his*, God's, *will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God.* [He shall see it in its true light, and be convinced that it is perfectly divine.] For (*Psal.* xxv. 14.) *the secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will shew them his covenant.* But (*Dan.* xii. 10.) *the wicked shall do wickedly, and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise* [the pious and virtuous] *shall understand.*

This is to make you sensible, that a sincere desire of true knowledge is a necessary disposition in entering upon the study of the Scriptures; and the obedience to God's commands, in the course of a pious life, is necessary to enlarge and establish the judgment in the knowledge of divine truths.

III. To the effectual study of Scripture, it is necessary, that our minds and hearts be unbiassed, unprejudiced, open to the truth, and always quite free to discern and receive it. If our spirits are under the power of prepossession and prejudice, we cannot be well disposed for searching the Scriptures. For instance, if a person, in matters of religion and conscience, is ambitious to gain reputation in the world, or solicitous only to please and recommend himself to a party, how should he study the word of God with the sincere and single view of discovering and embracing the truth, when he is pre-engaged, and all his care is to find what will please his fellow-creatures, and suit his own mean and selfish purposes? *Joh.* v. 44. *How can ye believe, who receive honour one of another*, whose ruling principle is the desire of temporal honour, and the favour of men, *and seek not the honour which comes from God only*, the honour of a good conscience, and of upright conduct? Or, if we resign our understandings and consciences to the authority of human decisions and decrees; or imbibe the bigotry of a party, which determines a person to retain pertinaciously a set of religious notions, without considering, or examining, how far they are agreeable to the word of God, our understandings and judgments are locked up, and no longer at liberty to discover the truth.

It is owing to this malignant cause, that great numbers of learned men, who call themselves Christians, will not allow themselves to make inquiry, whether the worship of saints, images, relicks, bread, and innumerable other absurd doctrines, and superstitious practices, are agreeable to the truth and purity of the Christian Religion. The error and

iniquity of this conduct in Papiſts we ſee and deteſt. But the ſame moral cauſe will in all caſes produce the ſame effects. If we act upon the ſame vicious principles; if we indulge the like prejudices, and in the ſame manner wilfully ſhut our eyes, we ſhall be more faulty than Papiſts, becauſe it is contrary to our profeſſion, as Proteſtants; and ſhall be equally incapable of ſeeing the truth and glory of our holy Religion. In ſtudying the Scriptures we ſhould always keep our minds open to evidence, and further diſcoveries of truth; which is the only way to be more and more ſolidly eſtabliſhed in our religious principles; for in no other way can we *grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.* Moreover, this is the only poſſible mean of reducing the Chriſtian world to unity both of hearts and ſentiments.

IV. Prayer to God, the Father of Lights, the Fountain of all Illumination, is neceſſary to the ſucceſsful ſtudy of the Scriptures. *Prov.* ii. 6. *The Lord* alone *gives wiſdom; out of his mouth cometh knowledge and underſtanding.* Nor hath he appointed any means, how excellent ſoever in themſelves, which exempt us from a dependence upon his bleſſing. All our ſprings are in him; and his gracious influences render our endeavours, of any kind, ſucceſsful. And therefore, when we addreſs ourſelves to the ſtudy of the holy Scriptures, we ſhould make our ſupplication to God, that he would *open* our *eyes, that* we *may behold wonderous things out of his law.* Or, in the Apoſtle's words, (*Epheſ.* i. 17, 18.) *that the God of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the Father of Glory, would give unto us the ſpirit of wiſdom, and revelation, in the knowledge of him; that the eyes of our underſtanding being enlightened,* we may have juſt apprehenſions of the riches of his wiſdom and grace, and that our hearts may be duly impreſſed with a deep and laſting ſenſe of them.

CHAP. II.

Of the Divine Diſpenſations, in Scripture called the WAYS *and* WORKS *of* GOD.

THE *Ways of God* דרכי אלהים frequently ſignify the Rules of Life, which he hath given us to obſerve. *Pſal.* cxix. 3. *They alſo do no iniquity; they walk in his ways,* i. e. *in the law of the Lord,* ver. 1. And *the Works* מעשים *of God* may ſignify the mere operation and productions of his power. But both theſe words have a more reſtricted and emphatical ſignification. דרך *a Way,* ſignifieth alſo a courſe of action, a cuſtom, conſtitution or inſtitution, which any perſon, or number of perſons form to themſelves. *Prov.* viii. 22. *The Lord poſſeſſed me,* Wiſdom, *in the beginning of his Way, before his Works of old.* Prov. xii. 26. *The way of the wicked,* their courſe of action, *ſeduceth them.* Hoſ. x. 13. *Becauſe thou didſt truſt in thy way,* the ſchemes and methods,

methods, political or religious, of thy own deviſing, *and in the multitude of thy mighty men.* Amos viii. 14. *The manner*, the way, *i. e.* the religious conſtitution, *of Beerſheba liveth*, ſubſiſts, flouriſheth, notwithſtanding the oppoſition made to it. עשה ſignifies to conſtitute, ordain, appoint, diſpoſe. *Num.* xxviii. 6. 2 *Chron.* ii. 11. *Pſal.* civ. 19. *Eccl.* iii. 11.

Hence *Ways* and *Works* ſignify the appointments, conſtitutions, or Diſpenſations of God. By which are meant, "The ſchemes or methods deviſed or contrived by the wiſdom and goodneſs of God, to diſcover, or ſhew himſelf, his nature and will, his beneficence, holineſs and juſtice, to the minds of his rational creatures, for their inſtruction, diſcipline and reformation, in order to promote their happineſs." Theſe are the great ends of the Divine Diſpenſations; and theſe the principal points to be attended to, in the explications of them.

The great God, for ever to be adored, hath actually given exiſtence to a world of moral agents, ſuch as we are. He therefore is our Father, and we are his offſpring, whom he hath created in love, that in a right and virtuous uſe of our rational powers, we may be qualified for honour and enjoyment in the heavenly world. This ſeems to be the higheſt deſign the Divine Goodneſs can form, and the higheſt excellency to which our nature can attain. And this may be conſidered as the baſis of all the Divine Diſpenſations from the beginning of the world. For without pious and virtuous diſpoſitions we cannot be qualified for honour and enjoyment. But pious and virtuous diſpoſitions cannot be forced upon us, by any external power whatever; they muſt, in ſome degree, be the effect of our own attention and choice. It is, therefore, becoming the Father of our Spirits, and ſuitable to beings of our capacities and circumſtances, that proper means be provided for our inſtruction and diſcipline. For inſtance, as God is not the object of any of our ſenſes, and can be ſeen only by our underſtandings, it is proper that he ſhould ſet before us, in the frame and furniture of the world, ſuch viſible and various diſplays of his Being, Power, Wiſdom, Juſtice, and kind Regards, as may engage our attention, diſcover his eternal Godhead, and lead us to the acknowledgment, adoration, love, and dutiful obedience of our Creator, Father, and Benefactor. Theſe are the works, the diſpenſations, or conſtitutions of Nature; whereby our Father, as in a glaſs held before our eyes and thoughts, has ſhewn himſelf to us for our inſtruction in piety and virtue.

But beſides the conſtitution of univerſal Nature, there are a variety of diſpenſations, which are more immediately relative to mankind. As the being born of parents, to ſupply the ſeveral generations of the world, whence reſult ſundry relations and duties; the being ſuſtained by food, covered and ſheltered by clothes and habitations, healed by phyſicians, taught by the learned and ſkilful; the infirmities, appetites, and paſſions of our conſtitution; the forming ſocieties for mutual help and commerce; the inſtitution of government, or the ſubordination of ſome to the authority of others, for preſerving good order, for the protection of virtue, and the reſtraint and puniſhment of vice. Add to theſe, wars, peſtilence,

lence, famine, earthquakes, and ſuch like events; all theſe may be reckoned among the Divine Appointments, or Diſpenſations; ſome for the exerciſe of our rational powers in right action; ſome for diſcipline, correction, and reformation; but none merely for deſtruction, except where reformation cannot be effected.

But thoſe Ways, or Diſpenſations, which in Scripture are conſidered as the great hinges of Divine Providence, on which his dealings with mankind have turned; or, as the principal events, by which the great purpoſes and councils of God's will have been executed, are chiefly to be attended unto. Becauſe right conceptions of theſe, under their ſeveral views, circumſtances, and connexions, will greatly contribute to the explaining of Scripture-Theology, and alſo mark out the proper order and method, in which it may be ſtudied. Let us therefore here, at firſt ſetting out, take a general ſurvey of them.

I. The Creation of the World, as above.

II. The Formation of Man after the Image of God.

III. Man, being created capable of enjoying the honours and felicity of heaven, was to be diſciplined and proved, in order to his being confirmed in the habits of virtue and holineſs; without which, neither man, nor any other rational being, can be fit to ſee, or enjoy, the Lord. Accordingly, the firſt moſt remarkable of God's works, in the newly-created world, was to put the Man, whom he had formed, upon a trial ſuitable to his circumſtances.

IV. Under which trial, man, yielding to temptation, ſinned, and ſo became ſubjected to the threatening of eternal death.

V. Which heavy doom, God, not willing to deſtroy his creature, was pleaſed in mercy, not only to mitigate, but alſo, man having altered his moral ſtate, thought fit to introduce a new diſpenſation of grace, in the hands of a Mediator; at the ſame time, ſubjecting the human race to a laborious life, to diſeaſes, and to death temporal; and this, in much goodneſs, to ſubdue the fleſhly Principle, to give a taſte of the bitter fruits of ſin, to prevent the opportunities and occaſions of it; and, by increaſing the vanity of the creature, to turn his regards more ſteadily to the all-ſufficient Creator.

VI. But men multiplying in the earth, abuſed the grace of God, and in about 1656 years time became ſo wicked, that *all fleſh had corrupted his way, and the earth was filled with violence.* Then, to purge the world from iniquity, and to recover it to a ſtate of righteouſneſs, God created a new thing in the earth, and, by a deluge of water, deſtroyed that wicked generation, preſerving the only Family that remained uncorrupt in the old world, in order to propagate piety and virtue in the new. At the ſame time, and for the ſame good purpoſes, he reduced human life into much narrower bounds.

VII. Not long after the deluge, to prevent a ſecond general corruption, God introduced another diſpenſation, by confounding the language of mankind; which divided the world into ſeveral diſtinct ſocieties, and, conſequently, kept them under a ſtricter government, and better preſerved their liberties, than if the world had been one great Empire.

VIII. Thus the outrage of violence and rapine was, in a good meaſure, cured. But now mankind fall into a different iniquity, namely, that

that of idolatry; whereby, within 400 years after the flood, the worſhip and knowledge of the one ſupreme God was in danger of being utterly loſt. To prevent this, the Divine Wiſdom erected a new diſpenſation by calling *Abraham* from among his idolatrous kindred, and conſtituting his family the ſtorehouſe and ſtandard of divine knowledge. To them he ſpake and revealed himſelf at ſundry times, and in divers manners, and ſeparated them from the reſt of the world, by peculiar laws and religious ceremonies, to ſecure them from the idolatrous practices of their neighbours. Thus they became God's peculiar people, diſtinguiſhed above all other nations, but with a view to the future great benefit of all nations. And to this day, bleſſed be God, we experience the happy effects of this noble ſcheme, and owe to it both our Bible, and the very being of the Goſpel church.

IX. The family of *Abraham*, by the divine conduct, was led into *Egypt*. And when they had been there, under grievous oppreſſion, 215 years, and were grown numerous enough to be a nation, God ſet himſelf at the head of them, as their King. And, in a country much eſteemed for learning and arts, whither men of genius and curioſity reſorted from all other parts, upon this ſtage, ſo proper, becauſe ſo public, God, as the king of *Iſrael*, combated the king of *Egypt*, and his fictitious gods, and diſplayed his infinitely ſuperior power both to deſtroy and to ſave, by many plagues inflicted upon the land of *Egypt*, and by bringing out the *Iſraelites* in oppoſition to all the forces of the king, and all the obſtacles of nature, and ſettling them, after they had been ſufficiently diſciplined in the wilderneſs, in the land of *Canaan*. Here God ſet up his peculiar kingdom amongſt them; and they alone of all the nations of the earth were the ſubjects of it, and happy in its ſingular privileges and bleſſings; but, at the ſame time, were exerciſed with various providential diſpenſations. The general rule of which, was this: while they adhered to the worſhip of the true God, they were always proſperous; when they declined to idolatry, they were either oppreſſed at home, or carried captive into other countries.

X. The long captivity in *Babylon* was not only a puniſhment to the *Jews*, but alſo a mean of publiſhing the knowledge of the true God over all the *Babyloniſh* empire, as appears very evidently in the Book of *Daniel*. And the diviſion of the *Grecian* empire, which put an end to the *Perſian*, after the death of *Alexander*, cauſed a new diſperſion of the *Jews*, eſpecially into *Aſia minor*, *Syria*, *Egypt*, *Cyrene*, and *Lybia*, where their ſynagogues were very common. And laſtly, when they were ſubjected to the *Roman* power, their God and religion became more known over all the *Roman* empire. Thus the way for the kingdom of the *Meſſiah* was gradually prepared. For though the knowledge of God, received from the *Jews*, made no public reformation of Pagan idolatry, yet it greatly diſpoſed men to receive the Goſpel when it ſhould be preached unto them. Some became *Jews*, many renounced idolatry, and worſhipped no other but the living and true God, who, in the Acts of the Apoſtles, are called, *devout Proſelytes*, *Greeks*, *thoſe that feared God*.

XI. Thus we are brought to the *coming of Chriſt*, who came *in the fulneſs of Time*; for he came as ſoon as God, by the various methods of his pro-

providence, had prepared the world to receive him. When God *had made ready a people prepared for him*, then Christ came, and fully explained the nature, laws, extent, and glory of the kingdom of God, and fulfilled the great and most excellent designs of divine wisdom, by giving himself a sacrifice and propitiation for the sin of the world.

XII. Then the great mystery of God, the calling of other nations, besides the *Jews*, into his kingdom and church, was opened, and made manifest by the preaching of the Gospel. For which purpose, he sent out his apostles, furnished with proper powers and credentials, especially the gift of tongues, whereby they were enabled to communicate the wonderful things of God to people of different countries. And by this means, the glad tidings of salvation, and the glorious light and privileges of the Gospel, have reached even to us in *Great-Britain*, who dwell in the uttermost parts of the earth.

XIII. But as *Christ* came to restore, to explain, and by the most glorious discoveries, and the richest promises, to enforce the law of nature, the true religion of all nations; and consequently, as his design was to erect an universal religion, which should recommend itself to all people, under their several political distinctions, and which, therefore, was to interfere with no political establishments, but should leave them, in every country, just as it found them, teaching the nations only to observe the eternal rules of righteousness in the hope of eternal life; I say, upon this grand, noble, and extensive plan, the *Jewish* polity would be sunk to a level with all other national governments; and the *Jew*, on account of any prior national advantages, would have no more claim to the blessings and privileges of the kingdom of God, than any of the *Gentiles*, or nations, who, in any of the most barbarous and despised parts of the earth, should receive the faith of the Gospel. For in the Christian religion *there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free; but Christ*, i. e. the faith and obedience, or true religion, which Christ taught, *is all, and in all*, Col. iii. 11. Thus the *Jew* is fallen from his superior claims and privileges; and he falls by that very method of divine wisdom and grace, which brought salvation to all other nations. Thus *the diminishing of the Jews is the riches of the world, and the casting away of them is the reconciling of the world*, (Rom. xi. 12, 15.) or the opening a door for the whole world to come into the peculiar kingdom of God.

This is the idea we ought to have of the rejection of the *Jews*. The grace of God was, and still is, as free to them as to other people, upon their embracing the Gospel; but their political constitution from henceforth gave them no distinction, or privileges in the kingdom of God, above the rest of mankind. And in no long time after the publication of the Gospel, their polity and civil constitution, which otherwise would have remained in full force, and have obliged them to obey its laws, as much as the constitutions of the other kingdoms of the world obliged their several subjects, was quite overthrown, by the destruction of the temple, and the expulsion of the *Jews* out of the land of *Canaan*. Which they have not been able to recover, but remain dispersed over the face of the whole earth to this day. Thus the Gospel dispensation was erected, and spread and prevailed every where.

XIV. The

XIV. The next of God's works was the permitting and managing a grand apoſtacy and corruption of religion in the chriſtian church, foretold by the Apoſtles, and at large in the book of the Revelation. After the apoſtles were removed out of the world, it pleaſed God to leave the profeſſors of the Goſpel, in matters of religion, to their own ignorance, paſſions and prepoſſeſſions. Thus the chriſtian faith, by degrees, was depraved, till the *Man of Sin* aroſe, a tyrannical, uſurped power, domineering over, and impoſing upon conſcience, forbidding the uſe of underſtanding, and intoxicating the inhabiters of the earth with falſe and deluſive learning, worldly pomp and ſplendor, religious ſorcery, and cruel perſecution of the truth. This, as it was the propereſt mean of producing the moſt eminent and nobleſt characters, was to be a long and ſevere trial of the faith and patience of the ſaints. In the times of this ſad diſpenſation, it is certain, we are now living; but, we hope, towards the latter end of it. Through the whole courſe of it God hath variouſly appeared, both in wrath upon the corrupters of religion, and in mercy for the comfort and ſupport of thoſe who oppoſed it. And thus the wheels of providence moved on, till the morning of reformation appeared in our happy land, which, for ſome centuries, hath been gradually advancing, and ſtill continues to advance, towards the perfect day. For a ſpirit of religious liberty, which hath been long oppreſſed, revives and gains ſtrength, the ſcriptures are more carefully ſtudied, eccleſiaſtical tyranny and perſecution, under every form, more generally deteſted; and things ſeem to have a tendency towards love, unity, and concord, the moſt perfect ſtate of religion in this world.

XV. This muſt give pleaſure to every good man, and he will cheerfully join his endeavours to bring on the next glorious diſpenſation, which we have in proſpect, when the *myſtery of God*, with regard to the aforeſaid corrupt ſtate of religion, *ſhall be finiſhed*; when *Babylon*, in all its principles and powers, ſhall fall; when *the holy city, the new Jeruſalem*, ſhall come down from Heaven, and God ſhall ſet up a pure and happy ſtate of the church.

XVI. How long that ſtate will continue, we do not certainly know. Nor have we any further clear diſcoveries of God's works till the awful day of the reſurrection, when the Lord himſelf ſhall in perſon deſcend from heaven with a ſhout, with the voice of the arch-angel, and the trump of God. *Then all they that ſleep in the duſt of the earth ſhall awake*, and ſhall be judged, *ſome to everlaſting life, and ſome to ſhame and everlaſting contempt. And they that be wiſe*, under any of the changes and diſpenſations of this preſent world, *ſhall ſhine as the brightneſs of the firmament, and they that* work together with God, and endeavour to *turn many to righteouſneſs, as the ſtars, for ever and ever.*

Thus I have given a ſketch of the works of God from the beginning of the world to the conſummation of all things. And very beautiful and ſurpriſing would the whole appear, could we ſee them in a full and clear light. But before we attempt a more particular explication of them in their ſeveral views, circumſtances, and connexions, we muſt make a few general remarks, which will aſſiſt our conceptions and inquiries.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

GENERAL REMARKS *upon the* DIVINE DISPENSATIONS.

CONCERNING the foregoing diſpenſations, we may in general remark, that as they are deviſed and executed by God—

I. They are all agreeable to the moſt perfect rules of righteouſneſs and truth. Nothing falſe, unjuſt, or injurious, can be charged upon the divine conſtitutions. For (*Deut.* xxxii. 4.) *all* God's *ways are judgment; a God of truth, and without iniquity; juſt and right is he.* Pſal. cxlv. 17. *The Lord is righteous in all his ways, and holy*, ſteadily acting according to truth, *in all his works.* See alſo *Rev.* xv. 3. And therefore they are in perfect conſiſtence with each other.

II. The ways of God are not to be conſidered as the effect of neceſſity, as if the end propoſed could not poſſibly have been otherwiſe gained; but as the reſult of wiſe choice, or divine prudence, preferring ſuch particular methods as preferable to any other, as beſt adapted to our circumſtances, or, all things conſidered, as the moſt likely to make mankind wiſe and happy. For inſtance, it is by the diſpenſation of God, that our preſent life is ſuſtained by food; not becauſe it is impoſſible we ſhould live in any other way, for God could ſuſtain our life in perfect health and ſtrength by an act of his own immediate power. Again, our food is produced by the influence of the ſun, by rain, the fertility of the ground, human labour and ſkill; not becauſe food could not be otherwiſe produced, for God could, by an immediate act of his own power, create food for us every day, as he did for the *Iſraelites* in the wilderneſs; but this method of ſuſtaining our life is a contrivance of divine wiſdom, to ſhew himſelf to our underſtandings, (for, had we been ſuſtained by an immediate act of divine power, we ſhould have been led to imagine, that, not God, but our own nature, had ſuſtained itſelf) and to exerciſe our virtue and induſtry in providing a ſubſiſtence, and to be mutually helpful to each other. Hence the works of God, in ſcripture, are aſſigned to his wiſdom. See *Pſal.* civ. 24. *Prov.* viii. 22. *Epheſ.* i. 5, *&c.*—iii. 9, 10.

III. Aſſuredly all the diſpenſations of God are calculated to promote virtue and happineſs. This is the line which runs through the whole, as will appear in our future inquiries into the nature and tendencies of each of them. At preſent it may ſuffice to obſerve, that, however our circumſtances may differ from thoſe of our firſt parents, the end of our being is the ſame as theirs; and we, as well as they, are upon trial, in order to our having the habits of holineſs formed in us, and our being fitted for eternal life. And though it is a ſad reflection to conſider, how the wickedneſs of men hath from time to time fatigued the patience of God, yet it muſt give us pleaſure to obſerve, how his goodneſs hath applied various remedies to prevent, or heal, the corruptions of mankind. In what way ſoever men have gone aſtray from him, his wiſdom has never been at loſs to find out the moſt proper expedients to reclaim them.

Evidently

Evidently his deſign is to ſave a ſinful world, and to carry religion, both in its perſonal influences, and general prevalence, to the higheſt perfection our preſent condition will admit (*a*).

IV. The ſcriptural diſpenſations, which have been enumerated, were ſeverally adapted to the then capacities and improvements, the moral ſtate and circumſtances of mankind. The ſeveral ages of the world may be compared to the ſeveral ſtages of human life, infancy, youth, manhood, and old-age. Now, as a man under due culture gradually improves in knowledge and wiſdom, from infancy to old-age, ſo we may conceive of the world, from the beginning to the end, as gradually improving in mental and religious attainments under the ſeveral divine diſpenſations (*b*). Which diſpenſations have been in every period ſuited to the improvements in knowledge and wiſdom, which then ſubſiſted in the world. *Adam*, when created, may be conſidered as a child without knowledge, learning, and experience; and therefore the diſpenſation he was under, was very different from that which we are under, who enjoy the benefit and light of ſo many preceding diſpenſations.

Corollary. *A preceding diſpenſation is intended and adapted to introduce and prepare for that which comes after it.* Experience is a natural and certain mean of improving in knowledge and wiſdom. This is univerſally true, as well with regard to communities as ſingle perſons. It is therefore agreeable to the nature of things, that in a progreſſive courſe of knowledge, and moral improvement, what we already have experienced ſhould be a ſtep to further advances; and conſequently, in a juſt plan or ſcheme of diſcipline, it is fit, that what goes before, ſhould be adapted to clear and eſtabliſh what is to come after. Thus mankind, reflecting upon preceding diſpenſations, will be admoniſhed and directed to reform old errors and corruptions; and thus, even the monſtrous apoſtacy of the church of *Rome* may ſerve to introduce and eſtabliſh that moſt perfect ſtate of Chriſtianity, which we expect will ſucceed the diſpenſation we are now under.

V. All God's diſpenſations are in a moral way, and adapted to the nature of rational agents. *Exod.* xiii. 17. Force and co-action deſtroy the

(*a*) Now, if ſuch a deſign ſhall appear evidently to run through the Books of the Old and New Teſtament, a man may, with infinitely greater propriety, ſuppoſe the moſt perfect drama (where the fineſt deſign is carried on by the beſt choſen plot, and by the moſt conſiſtent underplots, and beautiful, well-proportioned incidents) to have been writ by a number of the greateſt madmen or idiots, by piece-meal, in different ages; than imagine a thread of ſuch an end and mean running through above 40 writers, in more than 1600 years, to be the work of ſo many enthuſiaſts. Or, we may as well ſuppoſe the world to be framed by mere chance; or the moſt magnificent, beautiful, and convenient palace, that the imagination can figure to itſelf, to be built by men unacquainted with all the rules of architecture, in ſeveral diſtant ages, and without any model to build by, and to be ſupported by mere chance, through as many more; as imagine ſuch an unity of deſign and mean, as I have deſcribed, to be the reſult of enthuſiaſm and accident mixed together. *Ld. Barrington's Eſſay on the Div. Diſpenſations. Part I. Preface, p.* 26.

(*b*) Ages of a Man. 6. 16. 20. 30. 40. 50. 60. 70.
Ages of the World. 600. 1600. 2000. 3000. 4000. 5000. 6000. 7000.

the very nature of holiness; and therefore all divine methods of reformation are so wisely adjusted, as to leave human actions in their proper state of freedom. By none of his works did God ever intend to render wickedness impracticable; and he hath always provided sufficient supports for integrity and virtue. With this very sentiment prophecy in *Daniel* and in the Revelation is sealed up. *Rev.* xxii. 11. *He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he that is filthy, let him be filthy still.* That is to say, there is no cure for the obstinately blind and wicked; neither are the ways of God intended to purify those, who will not be made clean; but, after all that God hath done, *the wicked* (Dan. xii. 10.) *shall* be left to *do wickedly. And none of the wicked will understand, but* only *the wise will understand. But he that is righteous, let him be righteous still; and he that is holy, let him be holy still.* Hos. xiv. 9. *Who is wise, and* [for] *he shall understand these things? Prudent, and* [for] *he shall know them? For the ways of Jehovah are right; and the just shall walk in them; but the transgressors shall fall in them.* The sincere and upright, who choose the way of truth, or turn from sin unto righteousness, the righteous and merciful God will never forsake. They make a wise improvement of his dispensations, and, under all trials and difficulties, he will guide and support them; and their path shall be as the shining light, that shineth more and more to the perfect day.

COROLLARY. *Hence we may conclude—That in computing the progress of religion, under any dispensation, the quantity of knowledge and religion is to be measured only by the improvement of the righteous; and that the wicked, how many soever, are not to be taken into the account, as making any deductions from it.* Or, the advances of knowledge and religion, under any dispensation, are not to be estimated by numbers, but by the proficiency of single persons, how few soever. *Noah*, a single person, was, at the time of the deluge, the true standard of religious improvement in that age; though all the rest of mankind were exceeding corrupt and wicked.

VI. *Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world*, saith the apostle *James*, *Acts* xv. 18. Then all God's works were formed and planned in his counsels, and lay under his eye in one comprehensive view; and therefore must be perfectly consistent. One uniform scheme must be laid, and one even thread of design must run through the whole. They are not the result of sudden, incoherent thoughts; but a well digested plan, formed upon the most just principles by him who seeth all his works from the beginning to the end. Whence it follows, that if we do not discern one coherent design in the divine dispensations, or if we make any one part clash with the rest, we may be sure we do not understand them. Goodness was the principle of creation. God made man because he delighted to communicate being and happiness. Consequently, goodness and fatherly love, which was the beginning and foundation of God's works, must run equally through them all, from first to last.

VII. Previous notice was given of some of the principal dispensations, either for warning, or to prepare men for the reception of them. The deluge was preached by *Noah* 120 years before it came to pass. The Jewish dispensation was predicted to *Abraham* 430 years beforehand. *Jeremiah* foretold the Babylonish captivity; and *Paul*, and *John* at large, predict

predict and describe the grand apostacy. But the coming of the *Messiah*, and the gospel dispensation, run through the whole, from the beginning to the end, in a less or clearer degree of light. And it was fitting that this, which is the chief of God's works, should receive the brightest evidence from prophecy. And therefore it was not fit it should be introduced till such time as it had received that evidence; which in Scripture is called *the fulness of time.* Gal. iv. 4.

VIII. The dispensations of God are intended for our contemplation and study; and it is a singular advantage to form right notions of them, because they will tincture our conceptions of God, and influence our dispositions towards him. If we judge truly of God's works, we shall have agreeable and lovely ideas of the workman. His wisdom, his goodness and truth, will stand in a fair light, and we shall confess him infinitely worthy of our highest regard. Then we shall think of God with admiration, pleasure and delight, (*Psal.* xcii. 4. *Thou, Lord, hast made me glad through thy work*; *I will triumph in the works of thy hands*) and shall serve and follow him with willing minds. But if we form such conceptions of the ways of God, as represent them to be arbitrary and tyrannical, inconsistent with all our notions of justice and goodness, the effect of sovereign will, without either reason or love, he must stand before our thoughts in the most frightful colours. The most horrible gloom will be drawn over the perfections of the best of beings; our minds will be filled with darkness and dread; and, if we worship him at all, our worship and obedience will not be the free and generous duty of sons, but the joyless constrained drudgery of slaves.

IX. It must be remembered, that the works of God are unsearchable, and past our finding out to perfection. *Psal.* xcii. 5. *O Lord, how great are thy works, and thy thoughts are very deep!* From a just sense of the inscrutability of the divine dispensations, the apostle concludes a discourse upon the rejection of the Jews, and the calling of the Gentiles, with this solemn exclamation: *O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!* Rom. xi. 33. It becomes us to admire and adore the counsels of infinite wisdom, and to acquiesce where we cannot gain a full knowledge of them. *Rev.* xv. 3. *Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty!* We cannot comprehend the ways of God in their fullest extent, in all their largest views, and remotest connexions. He therefore that is wise will not cavil at them, nor foolishly endeavour to pry into them beyond the bounds of revelation, and of human understanding.

X. But under all our present darkness, and under every dispensation, an honest heart, sincerely desirous to know the truth, seriously inquisitive after it, meekly submissive to what God hath revealed and commanded, willing to work together with him, patiently persevering in well doing; such a temper, and such a conduct, is the best and safest guide under every dispensation; will enable us to follow God, to comply with every design of his providence, to overcome in every hour of trial, and will lead us to eternal life. To such a character, as well as to *Daniel*, (Chap. xii. 13.) it is the language of divine grace—*But walk thou*, thou honest, upright man, *walk thou thy way to the end*, take courage and

comfort, walk on, perſevere in the path of truth and integrity; *for*, after all the trials and diſquietudes of this world, *thou ſhalt reſt, and ſtand in thy lot*, the lot of pious and faithful ſouls, *at the end of the days.*

CHAP. IV.

Of the CREATION.

Gen. i. 1—26.

THIS is the work of creation. To *create* is to give Being to that which did not exiſt before; and ſo, is no contradiction. That a thing ſhould *be and not be at the ſame time*, is a contradiction and impoſſibility; but that a thing ſhould exiſt now, which did not exiſt before, is no more a contradiction, than that my hand ſhould move now, which did not move before.

That there is one firſt uncauſed Cauſe, from which all other beings derive their exiſtence, and upon whom they have their entire dependence, hath already been proved. Conſequently, all beings, except the firſt Cauſe, muſt have been produced, or brought into being, by the power and agency of the firſt Cauſe. Not produced, out of nothing, but out of nothing beſides the immenſe and unconceivable fulneſs of the ſelf-exiſtent Being, who muſt have in himſelf the power and poſſibility of all being; though we cannot comprehend or conceive in what manner, or by what kind of agency, he createth or communicateth exiſtence to beings diſtinct from himſelf.

Of the Creation of all things, *Moſes* in this chapter has given us a ſummary account; not in a preciſe philoſophical manner, but ſo as to give the men of that age in which he wrote, juſt and affecting notions of this firſt and moſt ſtupendous work of God, ſo far as was neceſſary to the purpoſes of true religion, and no further. It is enough, therefore, that his account is true, ſo far as it goes, and not in any reſpect inconſiſtent with the moſt accurate diſcoveries which have been made in later ages concerning the ſyſtem of the univerſe, or any part of it.

Ver. 1. *In the beginning*, &c. *The heavens and the earth* may comprehend the whole univerſe, or *all things viſible and inviſible*. It doth not therefore follow, that the whole univerſe was created all together at once, or at ſome one period of time. But the meaning is this; at firſt, when the univerſe was produced, it was brought into being by the ſole power and wiſdom of the almighty and eternal God. This is true, though the ſeveral parts of the univerſe may have been produced at different times, or at any diſtance of time from each other; and though God may ſtill be creating new worlds in the immenſe boſom of ſpace, which is not improbable: I ſay, it is true, that in the beginning of their exiſtence, whenever that was, God created, and is ſtill creating, them

all;

all; the ſentiment which *Moſes*, I apprehend, would inculcate being this, that the whole univerſe of beings, whenever created, doth not exiſt by neceſſity or chance; but had a beginning, and was produced by the ſole power of God.

But, as *Moſes* here gives us a particular account of the formation of our earth, this phraſe, *in the beginning*, may have a ſpecial reference to the time when our earth was created. The matter of which it conſiſts, was produced in the ſtate of a *Chaos*, (Ver. 2.) *without form and void*, i. e. ſhapeleſs, waſte, and uſeleſs; all the parts, ſolids and fluids, jumbled together, and ſurrounded with darkneſs, unadorned, uninhabited. But *the ſpirit of God moved upon the face of the waters*; i. e. the influences and exertions of the divine power actuated this dark, confuſed maſs, and digeſted, and reduced its parts to the beautiful ſtate and order in which we now behold them.

On the firſt day, and the firſt thing after the production of the *Chaos*, the element of light was created. *Ver.* 3, 4, 5.

On the ſecond day was created the element of air, or that body of air which we call the Atmoſphere, רקיע *the firmament*, or rather, ſpacious expanſion of air, where the fowls do fly, (Ver. 20.) and which is ſpread abroad above, and all round the earth, including meteors and clouds, which are the waters above, or at the upper part of, the atmoſphere, in contradiſtinction to the waters of the ſea and rivers, which are under it. *Ver.* 6, 7, 8.

On the third day the great God formed the element of water, by draining off the fluids of the *Chaos*, and cauſing them to flow into large cavities prepared to receive them; that thus the earth might become one firm, compact, voluble globe, and in a fit condition to produce graſs, herbs, trees, and plants, which were then created. *Ver.* 9, 10, 11, 12.

On the fourth day God created the ſun and moon. *Ver.* 14—19. The ſun being the centre of our ſyſtem, it ſeems probable that the whole ſolar ſyſtem was produced at the ſame time with the earth, though the deſign of the writer did not lead him to take notice of the other parts of it. But we have no juſt ground, from his account, to ſuppoſe that all the ſtars, which are probably each of them the centre of a diſtinct ſyſtem, were, on this day, all of them created. Moſt of them might have been created long before, and ſome of them ſince, our world came into being. For that clauſe (Ver. 16.) *he made the ſtars alſo*, in the Hebrew is no more than, *and the ſtars*; the words *he made* being inſerted by the tranſlators. And therefore it may be well rendered thus—*Ver.* 16. *And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the leſſer light to rule the night with the ſtars.* That is to ſay, *the moon and ſtars to rule the night*, as it is expreſſed, *Pſal.* cxxxvi. 9. The conjunction ו ſometimes hath the force of the prepoſition *with*; as *Gen.* iv. 20. *With his weapons.* 2 *King.* xi. 8. *Jer.* xxii. 7. *&c.*

Hitherto our globe, and perhaps the other planets, might, by the power of God, be ſuſpended in the empty ſpace, in a ſtate of reſt. But now, when the ſun, the centre of our ſyſtem, was created, and the earth was reduced to a proper ſtate of firmneſs and ſolidity, they might be thrown into thoſe regular and rapid motions, about the ſun,

and their own centres, which, by the same power impressed upon them, continue to this day; and by their exact periodical revolutions produce that grateful and necessary variety of day and night and seasons; namely, spring and summer, autumn and winter; which are certainly the effect of the annual and diurnal motions of the earth; and therefore the annual and diurnal motions might on this day commence. *Ver.* 14.

On the fifth day, fish and fowl; on the sixth day, beasts and man were created. *Ver.* 20, *&c.*

There is one difficulty remaining, namely, that *light* was created before the sun, *Ver.* 3, 14, *&c.* Whereas the sun is supposed to be the sole fountain of light, by emitting luminous particles from its body. But I suspect the truth of this hypothesis; and *Moses* may be found a more accurate philosopher than is commonly imagined. It appears from electrical experiments, that light is a distinct substance from all other, as much as air is from water; and that, by being properly excited, it may be made to appear in midnight darkness. Which shews, that it did exist in that darkness, previously to its being excited; and that it was rendered visible by being excited. Consequently it may, and, I doubt not, doth exist, expanded through the whole visible system of things at all times, by night as well as by day; and that the sun, a fiery body, is, in our system, the great exciter, by which the substance of light is impelled, and becomes visible. For, were there no substance of light previously existing throughout the whole system, no light would appear, though ten thousand suns should at once be placed in our hemisphere. Just as the ringing of the bell produces sound, not by an emanation of particles from the substance of the bell, but by exciting the air, or the sounding substance, without which the bell could produce no sound at all. As the air will not sound, so the light will not appear without being excited *. Upon this sup-

* This hypothesis, I presume, doth not interfere with any rules of optics, the rays of light being *excited* according to the same laws and directions by which they are supposed to be *emitted*. The light of a candle, upon an eminence, may be seen at least three miles at sea, in a dark night. Therefore, according to the common supposition, the flame of a candle, suppose of one inch diameter, must emit from its body instantaneously, and in every instant, while it continues to burn, as much luminous matter, or substance, as will fill a spherical space of six miles in diameter, or of 113,0976 cubical miles; which, notwithstanding the divisibility of matter *in infinitum*, seems to me to be incredible. It is surely more probable and rational to suppose, that the extremely agile particles of light, which fill that large space, are actuated, or excited instantaneously by the luminous body.

N. B. Dr. Taylor, some time after he had finished this scheme of scripture divinity, met with the same thought and reasoning in the ingenious author of Nature Displayed; and was not a little pleased to find an hypothesis, which he judged peculiar to himself, adopted by so deep an inquirer into nature.

That the curious reader may compare the passages, he is presented with the following extract.

" — * Light is visibly pre-existent to luminous bodies: this may seem a " paradox at first sight, but it is not therefore a less evident truth.—By light " we

* Vol. III. Page 409. Second Edition.

ſuppoſition the element or ſubſtance of light was created on the firſt day, and the divine power alone might be the exciter, which made the light appear

" we do not mean that ſenſation which we experience in ourſelves, on the " preſence of any illuminated body, but that inconceivably ſubtle matter, " which makes an impreſſion on the organs of ſight, and paints on the optic " nerve thoſe objects from the ſurfaces of which it was reflected to us. Light " then, taken in this ſenſe, is a body quite different from the ſun, and inde- " pendent on it, and might have exiſted before it, ſeeing now it does exiſt in " its abſence, as well as when preſent. It is diffuſed from one end of the " Creation to the other, traverſes the whole univerſe, forms a communi- " cation between the moſt remote ſpheres, penetrates into the inmoſt receſſes " of the earth, and only waits to be put in a proper motion to make itſelf " viſible.—Light is to the eye what the air is to the ear: Air may not be " called the body of ſound, and it does equally exiſt all round us, though " there be no ſonorous body to put it in motion; ſo likewiſe the light does " equally extend at all times, from the moſt diſtant fixed ſtars, to us, though " it then only ſtrikes our eyes, when impelled by the ſun, or ſome other " maſs of fire.

" The difference betwixt the propagation of ſound and light conſiſts in " this, that the air, which is the vehicle of ſound, being, beyond all com- " pariſon, more denſe than the vehicle of light, its motion is much ſlower. " Hence we may account for that common phænomenon, why we do not " hear the ſound of the firſt ſtroke of a hammer, when at a diſtance from it, " till it is at the point of giving the following blow; whereas light is pro- " pagated with incredible ſwiftneſs, though at ſome ſmall diſtance of time " between its receiving the impulſe, and its communicating it to us; ſeven " minutes, according to Sir ISAAC NEWTON's calculation, being ſufficient for " its paſſage from the ſun down to us. This difference of velocity between " the progreſſive motion of light, and that of ſound, is ſenſibly demonſtrated " by firing a gun in a large open plain, where the ſpectator, at a great " diſtance from it, will perceive the flaſh a conſiderable time before he hears " the noiſe.

" The body of light therefore does either exiſt independently of the lumi- " nous body, and only waits to receive a direct impulſe from it, in order to " act upon the organ of viſion; or we muſt ſuppoſe that every luminous " body, whether it be the ſun, a candle, or a ſpark, does produce this light " from itſelf, and project it to a great diſtance from its own body. There " is no medium between theſe two ſuppoſitions, and either the one or the " other muſt be true. But to aſſert the latter, is to aſſert a very great im- " probability; for if a ſpark, which is ſeen in every part of a large room, " fifty cubick feet in dimenſions, emits from its own ſubſtance a quantity of " light ſufficient to fill the whole room, then there muſt iſſue from that " ſpark, which is but a point, a body, the contents of which are fifty cu- " bick feet. How incredible the ſuppoſition!

" Suppoſe the lantern on the light-houſe of *Meſſina*, to be ſeen only eight " cubick leagues, of which itſelf is the centre; it will follow, that an " eye placed in any point of thoſe ſix cubick leagues will diſcern it, and " conſequently ſo much ſpace will be filled with the light of it. Now how " incredible that a little fire, ſome few inches in diameter, ſhould diffuſe " around it a ſubſtance capable of filling eight cubick leagues! Suppoſe the " lantern concealed, and the light immediately diſappears; let it be un- " covered the moment after, and it will inſtantly be ſeen as far as before, and

appear for the three firſt days of creation, until the ſun, the inſtrumental exciter, was produced.

Further, we muſt remark, that although God is here ſaid to create the world, yet it may be true, that he employed a ſubordinate agent in the formation of it; namely, the Son of God, who afterwards came into the world for the redemption of mankind. See *John* i. 2, 3. *Col.* i. 15, 16, 17. 1 *Cor.* viii. 5, 6. But though he was the inſtrumental cauſe, yet it is true, that God made all things, becauſe our Lord acted by a power derived from him. *He that hath built all things is God.* Heb. iii. 4.

So much for critical remarks. The ſubject naturally leads to the following reflections.

" Theſe are thy glorious Works, Parent of Good!
" Almighty, thine this univerſal Frame,
" Thus wonderous fair; thyſelf how wonderous then!

How wonderous, how immenſe is the power, goodneſs, and wiſdom, which gave exiſtence to the ſtupendous fabric and furniture of the univerſe!

I. Power. How vaſt and mighty is the arm which *ſtretched out the heavens, and laid the foundations of the earth!* which ſuſtains numberleſs worlds, of amazing bulk, ſuſpended in the unmeaſurable and unconceivably diſtant regions of empty ſpace; and ſteadily directs their various rapid and regular motions! *Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created all theſe things. He bringeth out all their hoſts by number, he calleth them all by names, by the greatneſs of his might, for that he is ſtrong in Power, not one of them faileth. Iſai.* xl. 26. How powerful was the command, *Let there be light, and there was light—Let there be a firmament*, &c. *By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the hoſt of them by the breath of his mouth. For he ſpake, and it was done; he commanded*

" conſequently fill eight cubick leagues of ſpace with freſh light: then " how many times eight cubick leagues of luminous matter, will all the ſucceſſive inſtants of illumination produce in one night's time! Sure nothing " was ever more inconceivable.

" On the contrary, how ſimple and natural is it to ſuppoſe, that as the air " exiſted before the bell that put it in motion, and cauſed it to vibrate into " ſound, ſo, in like manner, the light exiſted round the fire of *Meſſina*, before " the lantern was illuminated, and only waited to be put in motion by the " fire, in order to make an impreſſion on the eyes of the mariners. The ſun " and ſtars do, by the ſame means, make themſelves viſible, without ſuffering " any diminution of their ſubſtance, by continual emanations of luminous " matter into thoſe vaſt regions of ſpace through which we behold them; " God having placed between thoſe luminous globes and us, the body of " that light which we ſee, and which is impreſſed on the organs of viſion, " by their action and influence; but does not proceed from them, nor owes " its exiſtence to them.——The account of *Moſes* therefore, as to this par- " ticular, is agreeable to truth, as well as an uſeful leſſon of caution, when " he informs us, that God, and not the ſun, was the author and parent of " light, and that it was created by his almighty fiat before there was a ſun " to dart it on one part of the earth, and a moon to reflect it on the other."

manded, and it ſtood faſt. Pſal. xxxiii. 6, 9. Thus the Scriptures ſublimely expreſs the exertion of the divine Power in Creation; as if it were done inſtantaneouſly, and with as little difficulty as ſpeaking a word.

II. And as for Goodness, what an infinite fulneſs of life and being, what an immenſe, inexhauſtible treaſury of all Good, muſt that be, from whence all this life and being was derived! How infinitely rich is the glorious and eternal God! Out of his own fulneſs he hath brought worlds and worlds, repleniſhed with myriads and myriads of creatures, furniſhed with various powers and organs, capacities and inſtincts; and out of his own fulneſs continually and plentifully ſupplieth them with all the neceſſaries of exiſtence. And ſtill his fulneſs remaineth the ſame, unemptied, unimpaired; and he can yet bring out of his fulneſs worlds and worlds without end. How immenſely full of all life and being is the glorious and eternal God! Thus he is good in himſelf. And *he doth good.* He is kind and beneficent, willing to communicate being and good. How profuſe is his bounty! He might have kept, as I may ſay, the whole of exiſtence to himſelf; but he has liberally ſhared it out among his creatures; and of all his creatures in this world, the moſt liberally to us men. Survey the whole of what may be ſeen in and about this globe, and ſay, if our Maker hath a ſparing and niggardly hand; ſay, if we have a churliſh and unkind father. Certainly it is his pleaſure to form creatures, and furniſh them with enjoyment; and therefore *his tender mercies* muſt be *over all his works.*

III. His Wisdom appears illuſtrious in the variety, beauty, exactneſs, order, and harmony, in which God hath formed and fixed the univerſe; in the ſeveral capacities and degrees of excellence he has conferred upon his creatures; the proper ſtations he hath aſſigned to them; the ſubordination and ſubſerviency of one to another, which he hath eſtabliſhed, for the regularity and well-being of the whole. They are all, as they come out of his hands, juſt what they ſhould be, adjuſted in the exacteſt proportions to their ſeveral ends and connexions; all in every part and reſpect ſhewing the workmanſhip of the profoundeſt ſkill, and moſt curious art. The utmoſt ſtretch of human underſtanding can reach but a ſmall part of God's works; but they who ſtudy the wiſdom of Creation, cannot but admire, and uſe the words of the ſacred penman, *Pſal.* civ. 24. (where he is ſurveying the ſeveral parts of our globe) *O Lord, how manifold are thy works! In Wiſdom haſt thou made them all; the earth is full of thy riches!*

Theſe reflections will (1) inſpire the moſt elevated ſentiments of the moſt high and mighty Creator, who *is exalted* infinitely *above the heavens, his glory is above all the earth,* Pſal. cviii. 5. *The Lord our God is very great, he is clothed with honour and majeſty*; and we ſhould ſtudy to magnify him in our hearts by the moſt raiſed conceptions of his tranſcending greatneſs. (2.) This ſhould alſo fill our minds with joy, and our mouths with his high praiſes. This God is our God, our maker, and therefore our father. The firſt and moſt proper notion we ought to entertain of the great God is, that of a Father; our Father, and the Father of the whole univerſe. And greatly ſhould we be delighted with the diſplays of our Father's infinite power, wiſdom, and goodneſs. Tranſ-

ported with joy, by an elegant profopopœia, the Pfalmift, in the 148th Pfalm, calls upon all creatures to praife God; wifhing, in effect, that they had all of them underftandings and tongues to declare how much fkill and kindnefs he has fhewn in their formation and eftablifhment. Joy and praife are the Creator's due, and fhould be our conftant temper and practice. (3.) He who is the maker, is alfo the abfolute proprietor, Lord, and Sovereign of all things; and therefore hath the firft and higheft right to our reverence, fubmiffion, and obedience; in which he is infinitely able to fupport us in oppofition to all human power and authority. For *all Power*, not only his own inherent power, but alfo the Power of all created beings, *belongs to God.* From him it is originally derived, and the exercife of it depends entirely upon his will and pleafure; nor, in any inftance, can it poffibly act beyond the limits which he prefcribes. Therefore, in the way of duty, relying upon his all-fufficiency, we need not fear what man can do unto us. (4.) In our prefent fituation we are liable to many difficulties and diftreffes, from which we are not able to guard or extricate ourfelves; but the almighty Creator is infinitely able to deliver his fervants from any danger, and can clear a paffage through all embarraffments. He can make a way even in the fea, and a path in the mighty waters. (5.) He who from his own inexhauftible fulnefs hath brought forth all worlds and creatures, is our fhepherd; he careth for us, and can fully fupply all our wants. (6.) He can fully accompliſh all the great and glorious things revealed in the Gofpel. He can raife us from the dead, change our vile bodies, and clothe us with immortal honour and glory. This fhould not feem to us incredible, becaufe he hath already performed things as incredible, and we have conftantly expofed to our view effects of his Power no lefs wonderful.

CHAP. V.

Of the Creation *of* Man.

Gen. i. 26, to the End.

NOW we are come to the formation of *Man.* Here, obferve, the language of the Creator is altered. Inftead of, *Let there be Men*, God faid, (*Ver.* 26.) *Let us make Man*, or, we will make Man, *in our image, after our likenefs.* Q. d. "Now we have formed and furnifhed "the earth, let us make Man, the nobleft of our works, to inhabit, "cultivate, and enjoy it." The fuperior excellency of the human nature is fignified by the diftinguifhed manner in which God is repreſented as addreffing himfelf to the formation of Man.

The plural number is ufed [*And God faid, let us make Man*]; but according to the genius of the Hebrew language, this is only a magnificent way of expreffing the majefty of God; and amounts to no more than this, *And God faid, I will make Man.* So *Gen.* xi. 7. *Go to, let us go down*, i. e. I will

I will go down. Thus God is called *our Makers*, Job xxxv. 10. Pſal. cxlix. 2. *Thy Creators*, Eccl. xii. 1. *Thy makers is thy huſbands*, Iſai. liv. 5. which are all to be underſtood, and are rendered in the ſingular number. "Nouns appellative denoting dominion, according to the Hebrew idiom, are put in the plural inſtead of the ſingular." Should it be ſuppoſed, that the great God here ſpeaks to ſome other being or beings beſides himſelf, it muſt be to ſome ſubordinate beings; for neither this, nor any other paſſage of ſcripture, can juſtly be explained inconſiſtently with the unity, ſimplicity, or ſingleneſs of the divine nature.

Ver. 26. *Let us make Man in our own Image*, [*Heb.* in the ſketch or ſhadow of us] *after, or like, our Likeneſs.* Theſe words, with reſpect to God, are diminutive, and denote that the moſt perfect endowments of the human nature are but a ſketch, a ſhadow, or ſomething reſembling the Likeneſs of God. And yet, with reſpect to other creatures on earth, it ſpeaks high diſtinction, and ſuperiority. For this ſketch of the Image of God in Man muſt include, 1. The noble faculties of his mind; underſtanding and will, or freedom of choice, for the government of all his actions and paſſions, and his continual improvement in wiſdom, purity, and happineſs. 2. His dominion over the inferior creatures, expreſsly mentioned, *ver.* 26, 28. By which he is God's Repreſentative, or Viceroy upon earth.

But divines have underſtood this Image of God, as conſiſting in righteouſneſs and true holineſs; which they affirm, were *created with Adam.* Meaning, not that *Adam* was created with ſuch powers as rendered him capable of acquiring righteouſneſs and holineſs, but that he was *made* in this Image of God; it was *concreated* with him, or *wrought into his nature*, at the ſame time that it was created; and ſo belonged to it as a natural faculty or inſtinct. This they call *original righteouſneſs*, which they ground principally upon the two following paſſages. Col. iii. 9, 10. *Lye not one to another, ſeeing that you have* [by your Chriſtian profeſſion] *put off the old man with his deeds; and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the Image of him that created him.* Epheſ. iv. 22, 23, 24. *That ye put off, concerning the former converſation, the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful luſts: and be renewed in the ſpirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteouſneſs and true holineſs.* All this is ſuppoſed to relate to *Adam*'s being originally created in the Image of God.

The *old man*, ſay they, is a corrupt nature derived from *Adam*; and the *new man*, is fallen man reſtored to the primitive temper, or to that righteouſneſs and holineſs in which they ſuppoſe *Adam* was created. But this is wide of the Apoſtle's ſenſe. It is not uncommon with him to compare the Chriſtian church to a man, or the human body, of which *Chriſt* is the head, and we are all of us members in particular. The *new man* was created, when God erected the Goſpel Diſpenſation, and *broke down the middle Wall of Partition between us* Jews and Gentiles, (*Epheſ.* ii. 13, 14, 15, 16.) *for to make to himſelf*, in the Goſpel, *of twain*, or of the two parties, believing Jews and Gentiles, *one new man*, or the new conſtitution and community, under the Goſpel. To this *new man*, the *old man* is directly oppoſed; and therefore muſt ſignify the Gentile ſtate or community, headed by *Satan*, to which, before their converſion,

verſion, they were joined. This is confirmed by the Apoſtle, *Epheſ.* ii. 11. *Wherefore remember, that ye being in time paſſed* GENTILES *in the fleſh*, &c. And chap. iv. 17, &c. *This I ſay — that ye walk not as other* GENTILES *walk*, &c. They formerly belonged to the *old man*, the body of impure, idolatrous heathen; but now they had, by their Chriſtian profeſſion, *put off* this *old man*, together *with* all *his* wicked *deeds*, Col. iii. 9, 10, and *had put on the new man*, or were joined to the Chriſtian church, or community. And therefore, they were obliged to be *renewed in the ſpirit of their minds*, and to live in *knowledge* [true wiſdom], or *in righteouſneſs and true holineſs*. For God created the *new man*, or conſtituted the Chriſtian church, in wiſdom and righteouſneſs and holineſs, after his own Image, or the rectitude of his nature, with this deſign, to promote the ſame rectitude among men. For (*Epheſ.* ii. 10.) *we*, the new Man, or the whole body of Chriſtians, *are God's workmanſhip, created in Chriſt Jeſus unto good works, which God ordained*, when he formed the Goſpel Scheme, *that we ſhould walk in them.*

But what hath this to do with *Adam*'s being created in righteouſneſs and true holineſs? Which, in the nature of things, could not be created, or wrought into his nature at the ſame time he was made; becauſe ſuch a righteouſneſs would have been produced in him without his knowledge and conſent; and ſo would have been no righteouſneſs at all. For whatever is wrought in my nature without my knowledge and choice, cannot poſſibly be either ſin or virtue in me, becauſe it is no act of mine; but muſt be a mere natural inſtinct, like the induſtry of the bee, or the fierceneſs of the lion. Righteouſneſs is right action, directed by knowledge and judgment; but *Adam* could neither act, nor know, nor judge, before he and all his intellectual powers were created; and therefore he muſt exiſt and uſe his intellectual powers, before he could be righteous and holy.

We may further obſerve—That God made the firſt pair male and female, that they might multiply and inhabit the whole earth, and ſupply a perpetual ſucceſſion of men and women, pronouncing a bleſſing upon the regular propagation of the human ſpecies, *ver.* 28. *And God bleſſed them*, &c. But this bleſſing, divines have ſuppoſed, was turned into a curſe, by *Adam*'s tranſgreſſion; which ſo corrupted the human nature, that thereby and thenceforth we all come into the world under the wrath and curſe of God. But that this alſo is a miſtake, is moſt evident from *Gen.* ix. 1. where God repeats, and pronounces the very ſame original bleſſing upon the increaſe or birth of mankind 1600 years, and upwards, after *Adam*'s tranſgreſſion, when the world was to be reſtored, and repleniſhed from *Noah and his ſons*. This proves, that mankind, in all ſucceſſive generations, have come, and will come into the world, under the very ſame bleſſing and favour of God, which was declared at the firſt creation of Man. It is of great importance to obſerve theſe remarks, not to produce any diſguſt or animoſity towards thoſe that eſpouſe the contrary opinion, who ought to be treated with candour and forbearance, but to ſettle our own judgments upon right principles.

Once more; the original grant of ſuſtenance to Man was confined to herbs, and the fruits of plants and trees, *ver.* 29, 30. which afterwards was enlarged, and included animal food, *Gen.* ix. 3.

Now

Now let us take a ſurvey of the nature which God has graciouſly beſtowed upon us. The body conſiſts of a mean material, *the duſt of the ground*; but the mind is of nobler extraction, for (chap. ii. 7.) *God breathed into his noſtrils the breath of life, and Man became a living ſoul.* Job xxxii. 8. *The inſpiration of the Almighty giveth us underſtanding*; the nobleſt gift of our Maker. The force and excellence of which appears in a ſurpriſing variety of inventions and diſcoveries. It is this faculty which penetrates into the moſt ſecret receſſes of Nature; judges of, and admires the beauty and contrivance of the vaſt fabric of the univerſe; and traceth the footſteps of the moſt aſtoniſhing wiſdom and regularity in the various ſituations and motions of the heavenly bodies. By this we review generations and actions, characters and events, that exiſted long before we were born; and dart our reflections the other way, into futurity, even as far as to the final period of this world, with all its works. By this we conceive, though but negatively, Eternity itſelf; and apprehend the ſtate and felicity of beings far ſuperior to ourſelves. By this we ſtretch our thoughts to the higheſt excellency, and contemplate the nature of the infinitely perfect Being.

Our ſingular honour and advantage lies in our moral capacities. While inſtinct determines the purſuits of inferior creatures; whilſt they are utterly unable to judge of cauſes and effects, to draw conſequences, or to reaſon about the natures and tendencies of things, in order to avoid or embrace, and are rather acted upon than act; we deliberate, we chooſe our way, we feel and examine what is before us; this is good, and therefore to be choſen; this is evil, therefore to be avoided; this will improve and exalt our life, this leads to diſhonour and miſery. We can ſtudy and obſerve the precepts of Divine Wiſdom; imitate the moral perfections of Deity; converſe with the ſupreme Father, and deſire, and diſpoſe ourſelves for, the everlaſting enjoyment of his favour. And agreeably to theſe diſtinguiſhing honours of our nature, God our Maker, whoſe delights are with the children of men, has expreſſed his high regards to us, by ſupplying us with all proper materials for the improvement of our underſtandings; not only the objects of nature; but alſo the writings of good and wiſe men, eſpecially the holy Scriptures, a rich treaſury of the moſt excellent knowledge; containing the moſt ſurpriſing diſcoveries, the moſt uſeful inſtructions, the moſt juſt and noble principles and motives, and whatever is proper to cultivate and refine our ſpirits. In particular, the redemption of the world by our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. That God ſhould ſend his well-beloved Son out of his boſom to dwell among us in our fleſh, to reveal the high deſigns of the Divine Wiſdom and Goodneſs, to give himſelf a ſacrifice and offering to God upon the croſs, to make atonement for our ſins, to raiſe us to the dignity of kings and prieſts to his God and Father, that we might reign for ever with him; this exalts the love of God to men infinitely beyond our higheſt thoughts and imaginations; this raiſes our nature to an amazing, to an inexpreſſible dignity and value.

Theſe conſiderations ſhould diſpoſe us to be pleaſed with our being, and thankful to our Maker for it. With pleaſure we ſhould reflect that we are *men*. Every perſon, how low ſoever in the world, hath that in poſſeſſion, which is more valuable than thouſands of gold and ſilver; an

immenſe

immenſe treaſure, to which the whole earth bears no proportion, *himſelf* a reaſonable Soul, an immortal Spirit; to which, in real excellence the viſible creation, the earth with all its material riches, the ſky with all its ſplendid furniture, is not to be compared. Let us not meaſure ourſelves by worldly riches. The ſoul is the ſtandard of the Man, and raiſes him vaſtly above all that is earthly. How fooliſh then, how ſhameful, how impious is it to proſtitute ourſelves to the trifles of the world; to be fond of earthly things, and to make our reaſon a drudge to ſenſual purſuits! God has made us *Men*, creatures of the fineſt powers and faculties; he hath uſed us as Men, by making the moſt ample proviſion to enable us to honour his Grace and our own being. And ſhall we deſert our Manhood? Shall we deſpiſe the rich bounty of Heaven? Shall we mingle with the duſt that particle of ſuperior life, which God hath breathed into us? Rather let us aſſert the dignity of our being, and make it our principal care to improve it by all the advantages God hath provided. The knowledge of God; conformity of heart and life to his will; the fruits of the ſpirit, joy, peace, long-ſuffering, gentleneſs, goodneſs, fidelity, meekneſs, temperance; converſe with God; the high privileges of the ſons of God; the proſpects of eternal glory; theſe are the objects of our care: as we are enlightened by the Goſpel, we are obliged to make theſe our ſtudy, and to form our ſpirits according to the ſublime and excellent ſentiments which theſe inſpire, that thus we may be fitting ourſelves for a much higher and more perfect degree of exiſtence in a better world.

CHAP. VI.

Of the INSTITUTION *of the* SABBATH.

Gen. ii. Ver. 1, 2, 3.

AS ſoon as God had created the world, and man in it, he *bleſſed the Seventh Day*, upon which he reſted from creation, and *ſanctified it*, i. e. he diſtinguiſhed it from the other ſix days by ſetting it apart to the purpoſes of religion. Thus the ſanctification of the Sabbath is the firſt and oldeſt of God's inſtitutions, and muſt have a real foundation in the nature of Man, and an immediate connexion with our being, and the great and excellent ends of it. The Sabbath and Man were, in a manner, created together. This is an indication, that although the particular time is, as it muſt neceſſarily be, of poſitive appointment, yet the thing itſelf is an article of natural religion, and ſtands upon the reaſon of things. The great end for which we are brought into life, is to attain the knowledge, and to be confirmed in the love and obedience of God; which includes all right action and virtue, all that is perfective of our nature, all that renders us happy in ourſelves, and a

bleſſing

bleſſing to others; and all that can qualify us for the enjoyment of God, and fit us for immortal honour and glory. We cannot keep a due and prevailing ſenſe of theſe things upon our minds, without cloſe and repeated application of thought; and therefore, as the affairs and neceſſities of this preſent life make ſuch conſtant and importunate demands upon us, that our hearts and thoughts would be unavoidably ingroſſed by them, it is in the nature of things neceſſary, that ſome certain time ſhould be publickly appropriated to the exerciſes of religion, inſtruction, prayer and praiſe, to fortify our minds againſt temptations, and to ſeaſon them with piety and virtue. And doubtleſs, God alone hath wiſdom and authority ſufficient to aſſign that portion of time which is proper and generally competent for thoſe good purpoſes.

The Sabbath is perfectly ſuited to our nature and circumſtances, and therefore was very properly inſtituted at the creation. But ſome of the learned pretend, that *Moſes* here ſpeaks, by anticipation, of the Inſtitution of the Sabbath a long time after this, when he was law-giver in *Iſrael*. This is a fiction without any foundation in the text. The hiſtorian expreſsly relates, that God bleſſed and ſanctified that day on which he reſted, or ceaſed, from creation; which, in all fair conſtruction, muſt be underſtood of his ſanctifying it, at the time when he reſted from creation. That we find no other mention of the Sabbath in the ſummary and very comprehenſive hiſtory of *Geneſis*, is no proof that the Patriarchs did not obſerve it; much leſs that the law thereof was not all that time in force. We find not the leaſt mention, or intimation, of the Sabbath in all the book of *Joſhua*, nor in *Judges*, *Ruth*, I *Samuel*, II *Samuel*, I *Kings*, till we come to II *Kings*, iv. 23. a far more particular hiſtory than the book of *Geneſis*; and yet it is very certain that the law of the Sabbath was all that time in force, and without doubt was obſerved too. There are very clear intimations of regard to the Sabbath in the book of *Geneſis*, chap. viii. 8—13. Thrice *Noah* ſent the dove out of the ark, after he had every time waited ſeven days. *Jacob* (Gen. xxix. 27, 28.) fulfilled *Leah*'s week. This plainly ſhews the Patriarchs, long before *Moſes* was born, reckoned time by *ſeven days*, or *weeks*; which can be referred to no other ſuppoſable original but the inſtitution of the Sabbath, at the creation.

The *Iſraelites* indeed, during their long continuance and ſervitude in *Egypt*, upwards of 200 years, ſeem to have loſt their reckoning of the Sabbath, when they were conſtrained by perpetual and moſt ſervile labour to neglect the obſervance of it. However, it certainly was the appointment of God, that they ſhould begin a new reckoning of the ſeventh day, and form a new epocha, namely, the falling of the *manna*. Exod. xvi. 5. *And it ſhall come to paſs on the ſixth day, they ſhall prepare that* manna *which they bring in; and it ſhall be twice as much as they gather daily.* And when the people had done ſo, *the rulers of the congregation came, and told Moſes*; probably inquiring into the reaſon, why God had given ſuch an order, *ver.* 23. *And Moſes ſaid unto them, This is that which the Lord hath ſaid*, or, this is the meaning of the Divine Command; *To-morrow is the reſt of the holy Sabbath unto the Lord.* Ver. 25, 26. *Ye ſhall not then find it in the field; ſix days ſhall ye gather it, but on the ſeventh day, which is the Sabbath, there ſhall be none.* And this courſe continued

for

for forty years, till they came into the land of *Canaan*. Now this was deviſed in much wiſdom to ſettle and determine the day, which, otherwiſe, having loſt their reckoning, during their long ſervitude in *Egypt*, they poſſibly would not eaſily have been brought to agree upon. For thus, for forty years together, they would be under a neceſſity of diſtinguiſhing the Sabbath, and of reſting upon it; having little elſe to do, the greateſt part of the time, but to gather and dreſs *manna*; and no *manna* falling upon that day, they muſt of courſe be aſſured of the day, and obliged to reſt upon it. Note — the reſtoring and aſcertaining the Sabbath, was the firſt point of religion that was ſettled, after the children of *Iſrael* came out of *Egypt*, as being of the greateſt moment; and this, in relation to the original inſtitution; for the law at mount *Sinai* was not then given.

Afterwards the ordinance of the Sabbath was inſerted into the body of the moral law, under a particular emphaſis, *Remember the Sabbath-Day to keep it holy*. And the *Jew* is reminded of the antiquity of this inſtitution, in the reaſon annexed to this commandment, *For in ſix days the Lord made heaven and earth*, &c. And being thus ranked among the other great articles of our duty, which are of moral obligation, and are always referred and appealed to, by our Lord and his Apoſtles, as binding to us Chriſtians, it muſt ſtand upon the ſame ground, and lay the ſame obligations upon our conſciences. For the ſame truth and authority, which enacted the reſt, enacted this precept alſo. He that ſaid, *Thou ſhalt have no other gods before me—thou ſhalt not bow down to any graven image—thou ſhalt not take the name of God in vain—honour thy father—thou ſhalt do no murder*—&c. ſaid alſo, *Remember the Sabbath-Day to keep it holy*.

The Jewiſh feſtivals, new-moons and ſabbaths, as they were ſhadows and figures of good things to come under the Goſpel, our Lord did aboliſh. When the ſubſtance was come, the ſhadow vaniſhed. And it is of ſabbaths in this ſenſe the Apoſtle ſpeaks, *Col.* ii. 16. *Let no man judge you in meat, or in drink, or in reſpect of a holy-day, or of the new-moon, or of the ſabbath-days*. But the ſeventh-day Sabbath was no part of the Levitical law; it exiſted long before that, and therefore was not aboliſhed with it. On the contrary, our Lord claims dominion over the Sabbath. *Luke* vi. 5. *He ſaid unto the Phariſees, that the Son of Man is Lord alſo of the Sabbath*. Therefore the Sabbath muſt be an ordinance belonging to our Lord's kingdom, otherwiſe he could not be Lord of it. He never pretended to be Lord of circumciſion, or of ſacrifices; theſe belonged to a diſpenſation of which he was not Lord. But he is Lord of the Chriſtian Diſpenſation, and its ordinances, and among the reſt, of the Sabbath. In conſequence of which Lordſhip,

I. He rectified the ſuperſtitious abuſe of the Sabbath, and reduced it to the original ſtandard. He reformed the traditionary corruptions of ſeveral of the commandments of moral and eternal obligation (*c*). But of all others, moſt ſignally, remarkably, and conſtantly, by words and by deeds, at the hazard of his life, he reformed the abuſe of the fourth commandment;

(*c*) Mat. v. 21, 27, 33. xv. 4, &c.

commandment (*d*); which he never would have done, had the Sabbath been an ordinance that was to die in a little time with the Jewish dispensation. On the contrary, this demonstrates, that he regarded the just sanctification of the Sabbath as of perpetual obligation, and as of very great importance in religion.

II. He removed the Sabbath from the seventh to the first day of the week. For we find in the Apostolic History that the Disciples met together on that day, (called the Lord's Day, *Rev.* i. 10.) to break bread, or to celebrate the Lord's Supper, which is the proper and peculiar worship of Christians, *Acts* xx. 7. Now this could not be done without the express injunction of the Apostles; nor could the Apostles do this without a commission from Christ. And as our Lord rose from the dead on the first day, we suppose the Christian Sabbath hath relation to his Resurrection; and so the Lord's Day hath been kept holy by the universal Church from the Apostles days to this time.

Thus there have been three *epochas*, or dates, from which the Sabbath has been counted, namely, (1.) From the first day of the creation. (2.) From the first day of the falling of the *manna*. (3.) From the first day of the Gospel Dispensation. But still it is the seventh day makes the Sabbath, which God blessed; and the seventh, which we now observe, is as much, and as truly the Sabbath, which God sanctified, as ever it was from the beginning of the world.

The primary notion of the Sabbath, is a rest or cessation from the ordinary business of life. The design of it is to preserve true religion; which would never have been lost in the world, had the Sabbath been duly observed from the first institution of it. And therefore we find in Scripture, both under the old and new dispensations, it was applied to the purposes of religion. It is represented as a holy convocation, on which the *Israelites* were to assemble for divine worship, *Lev.* xxiii. 3. *David* wrote the 92d Psalm for the Sabbath-Day, and therein gives us just ideas of the work of it. On this day the *Jews* met together in their synagogues for religious exercises; and there our Lord honoured and sanctified the Sabbath by his presence and instructions. *Mark* i. 21, 2. vi. 2. *Luke* iv. 16, 31. xiii. 10. And all Christians, in all times and places, have assembled on the Sabbath to hear the word of God, to offer up prayer and thanksgiving, and to celebrate the Lord's Supper, in order to employ their thoughts in pious meditations, and furnish their minds with the best principles and dispositions. A work exceeding pleasant and profitable, which demands and deserves the whole of our thought and attention. Therefore, for this good purpose, we are to rest from ordinary business, and to avoid whatever may dissipate our thoughts, or indispose our hearts for the heavenly work of the day.

Our Lord hath taught us so to understand this, as not to mix any thing superstitious with the observation of the Sabbath, nor to conceive of it as such a scrupulous rest, that we may not do any thing fit and reasonable, and which otherwise is a duty; works of necessity and mercy he expressly allows. Whatever cannot be deferred to another day, without loss

(*d*) See Mat. xii. 1—12. Luke vi. 10, 11. xiii. 11—17. xiv. 1—7. John v. 9—19. vii. 19—23. ix. 14, 15, 16.

loss or damage, may be taken care of on the Sabbath. And in general he hath pronounced, *That the Sabbath* (alluding probably to the first institution of it) *was made for man*, to be subservient to his virtue and happiness; *not man for the Sabbath.* Man was made for duties of moral and eternal obligation, and is bound to observe them in whatever extremity or necessity he may be; but man is not made for the rigorous observation of the sabbatical rest, or any other positive institution, so as thereby to embarrass or distress his life, or to neglect any opportunity of doing good.

I conclude with a few reflections upon *Isai.* lviii. 13, 14. Having, in the name of God, recommended goodness, charity, and compassion, in the preceding verses, and pronounced a singular blessing upon those who exercise them, the Prophet adds, by the same authority, *If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day.* q. d. "If you conscientiously suspend the ordinary business of life, and forbear "to please and gratify your own inclinations, that with a free and composed mind you may attend upon the services of religion, for which I "have sanctified the Sabbath; *and* [if thou] *call the Sabbath a delight, the "holy of the Lord, honourable, and shalt honour him*; if you have such a sense "of the excellency and benefit of the Sabbath, that you take delight "therein, accounting it a pleasure and happiness, as being consecrated "to the worship of the most high God, and therefore honourable and glorious in itself; and honourable also to you, as it is a mark of the dignity of your nature, a token of your interest in the divine favour, "(*Exod* xxxi. 13. *Ezek.* xx. 12.) and of your being admitted to communion with him; if in this persuasion you shall sincerely endeavour "to honour God by employing the day in the offices of devotion, *not "doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine "own words*; not doing the ordinary works of your calling, nor spending the time in amusements or diversions, or in impertinent conversation; *then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord*; then thou shalt become "such a proficient in piety, and gain such a sense of God and religion, "as will establish in your heart a fund of holy pleasure, comfort, joy, "and good hope towards God." The Prophet, in this chapter, is inculcating real, vital, acceptable religion, goodness and compassion to our fellow-creatures, and piety towards God in keeping the Sabbath; promising the like blessings to both those branches of true religion, namely, the favour of God and the constant care of his Providence. We may therefore take this from the Spirit of God, as a just description of the right manner of sanctifying the Sabbath, and assure ourselves, that he who blessed the Day, will bless us in keeping it holy.

CHAP. VII.

Euphrates
Hiddekel or Tygris
ASSYRIA
ED- -EN
The Garden
Gihon
Pison
CUSH
or ETHIOPIA hodie
CHUSISTAN
See Seneca's Collect. Maps.
HAVILAH
Persian Gulf

CHAP. VII.

Of a State *of* Trial.

Gen. ii. 8—18.

CONCERNING the situation and rivers of the country of *Eden*, as here described by *Moses*, Bp. Patrick, in his Commentary upon this place, gives an account which seems to be not altogether improbable. The Garden lay in the country of *Eden*; *out of*, or through, which country *a river went* unto the Garden *to water it* (*ver.* 11.); *and from thence*, from the country of *Eden*, *it parted*, or was divided, *and became into four heads*; namely, two above, before it entered *Eden*, called *Euphrates* and *Hiddekel*, or *Tigris*; and two below, after it had passed through *Eden*, called *Pison* and *Gihon*, *which compasseth*, or runneth along by, *the whole land of Cush*. ver. 13.

In the eastern part of *Eden* the Lord God planted a Garden furnished with all pleasant and useful fruits. And there he placed *Adam* to dress and keep it; for man was made for business, *ver.* 8, 15. Two trees in this Garden were remarkably distinguished from the rest, perhaps in appearance and situation, as well as in use, namely, the *Tree of Life*, *and the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil*. These, I conceive, were appointed for instruction and religious meditation; to preserve in *Adam*'s mind a sense of the consequences of virtue and vice, or of obedience and disobodience. In this view, while he continued obedient, he was allowed to eat of the Tree of Life, as a pledge and assurance on the part of God, that he should live for ever, or be immortal; after his transgression he was denied access to it, *chap.* iii. 24. For the same purpose, as a pledge of immortality restored in Christ, it is used, *Rev.* ii. 7. xxii. 2. On the contrary, the other Tree was designed to give him the knowledge, the sense or apprehension of good and evil, or of good connected with evil, *i. e.* of pernicious enjoyment, destructive gratification, vicious pleasure, or such as cannot be enjoyed without transgressing the law of God. *Good and Evil*, I apprehend, is an *hendiadys*, like that *Gen.* xix. 24. *brimstone and fire*, i. e. fired or burning brimstone. 1 *Chron.* xxii. 5. *the house must be—of fame and glory*, i. e. of glorious fame. *Pateris libamus et aura*, i. e. aureis pateris. טוב may signify pleasure or profit. [See the explication of it in the Heb. Engl. Concordance.] Thus *Good and Evil* may denote pernicious pleasure or profit. Of the fruit of this Tree, though it appeared pleasant and inviting, *Adam* was forbidden to eat upon pain of death. This was to make him understand, that unlawful enjoyment of any kind would be his destruction.

These two Trees may be considered as *Adam*'s books. He was in a kind of infantile state, void of all learning, without any theorems or general principles to govern himself by. God was therefore pleased, in this sensible manner, to impress upon his mind just conceptions of the very different consequences of obedience and disobedience. And it will

be of great use even to us, at this day, to look into, and to meditate upon these two books of our first father.

What requires our particular attention is this, that *Adam*'s obedience is put upon Trial by the prohibition, *ver.* 17. *But of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die. Adam* had not gained the habits of obedience and holiness, but was put under this instance of discipline in order to his acquiring of them. As soon as God had made Man a moral agent, he put him upon Trial. And it is universally allowed, that all mankind are in the same state, in a State of Trial. It must therefore be of importance to have right notions of such a State.

In order to this, let it be well considered,

I. *That God hath erected a kingdom for his honour, and the felicity of his rational creatures.* This kingdom, our Lord informs us, was *prepared from the foundation of the world.* Mat. xxv. 34. There we men shall be *equal to the angels*, Luke xx. 36; and probably, like them, shall be placed in posts of honour and power, in some part of the universe; as is plainly intimated, *Mat.* xxiv. 45—47. xxv. 21. *Luke* xix. 17. 1 *Cor.* vi. 2, 3. *Rev.* ii. 10. iii. 21.

II. *Without holiness, or an habitual subjection of the Will to Reason, or to the Will of God, none can be fit to be members of this kingdom.* Wickedness, in its very nature, stands directly opposed to the peace and well-being of the universe; for it is error in the mind, rebellion against God, and mischief to all within its influence. And the most benevolent of all Beings will not take error, rebellion, and mischief into his kingdom, erected for the purposes of goodness and enjoyment. *Rev.* xxi. 27. *And there shall in no wise enter into it*, the holy City, new Jerusalem, (ver. 2.) *any thing that defileth*, any impure, vicious persons; *neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or* maketh *a lie*; all idolaters, all that practise iniquity and deceit, are excluded out of it. *But they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it*; the excellent of the earth, who have purged themselves from all ungodliness and sin, and so *are Vessels unto honour, sanctified and fit for the Master's use, and prepared unto every good work.* Nothing but subjection to the Will of God, in all duty and obedience, can qualify us for the honours, felicity, and employments of the kingdom of heaven. Therefore,

III. *No moral agents, merely on account of their* natural *powers, how excellent soever, are worthy to be admitted into the kingdom of God.* Natural powers, in angels as well as worms, are the workmanship and gift of God alone; and therefore, not being the virtue, nor the effect of the virtue of the beings that are possessed of them, can be no recommendation to the continued favour and esteem of God. In order to that, the natural powers of moral Agents must not only be capable of right action, but also actually exerted in acting rightly. Otherwise, their powers, though of the noblest kind, are useless and insignificant. It is one thing to be born, or produced into the *kingdom of nature*, and another to be born to the habits of virtue, whereby we are rendered fit to be admitted into the *kingdom of heaven.* The former depends entirely upon God's sovereign pleasure, in giving life and powers, in any kind or degree, as he chooseth; the other depends upon a right use and application of the

powers

powers God hath beſtowed; and is the privilege only of thoſe wiſe and happy ſpirits, who attain to a habit of true holineſs. And thus, our Lord's rule, *Joh.* iii. 3. *Except a man be born again, he cannot ſee*, or enjoy, *the kingdom of God*, may extend to all created minds, whatſoever, under their ſeveral peculiar circumſtances.

IV. *Holineſs, or virtue, cannot be forced upon us whether we will or not.* The violence which overpowers and compels the Will, deſtroys the Will or Choice, and conſequently deſtroys Virtue; which is no otherwiſe Virtue, than as it is freely choſen. That being which cannot be vicious, cannot be virtuous. If he is not free to chooſe evil, he is not free to chooſe good; for a power of being virtuous, neceſſarily implies a power of being the contrary. The only means, therefore, that can be uſed to induce a moral Agent to Virtue, are inſtruction, admonition, perſuaſion, the impreſſion of objects or circumſtances upon the mind, the ſuggeſtions of the Spirit of God, and ſuch like methods as engage attention, and influence inclination and choice, without deſtroying Freedom. And a *habit* of Virtue, which alone recommends us to God, can be gained and aſcertained no otherwiſe than by repeated Acts, by uſe and exerciſe, by being put to the proof under proper Trials, by reſiſting ſolicitations, ſurmounting difficulties, and bearing ſufferings. This is the moſt natural way of bringing Virtue, or Holineſs, to its maturity and ſtability. Therefore,

V. *It ſeems agreeable to the reaſon of things, that all rational creatures whatſoever ſhould, for ſome time, be in a State of Trial.* However, this is, or hath been, the caſe of all we are acquainted with. The Angels have paſſed through a probation, doubtleſs adapted to their different circumſtances; in which ſome of them *abide not in the truth*; *they ſinned*; *they kept not their firſt eſtate*; *Joh.* viii. 44. 2 *Pet.* ii. 4. *Jude* 6. And our firſt parents, how ſingular ſoever their condition might be in other reſpects, were put under a particular Trial, by being forbidden to eat of *the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil*; which muſt be intended to form their minds to an habitual obedience to the Law, or Will, of God.

VI. *We Men are upon Trial.* This is evident from Revelation, where we are repreſented as *Pilgrims and Strangers*, looking for, and travelling to a better country, 1 *Pet.* ii. 11. — As in a *warfare*, where we muſt fight for the victory, as we hope to be crowned, *Epheſ.* vi. 14. — As in a *race*, where we are running for a prize, *Heb.* xii. 1. 1. *Cor.* ix. 24, 25. — As *labourers* in a vineyard, who have work to do in order to receive wages, *Mat.* xx. 1. — As *ſervants* intruſted with their maſter's ſubſtance, for the improvement of which they are accountable to him, *Mat.* xxv. 14. *Luke* xix. 13. And God hath appointed a day, in which he will call us to an account for our preſent behaviour, and render to every man according to what he hath done in the body, whether it be good or evil. This is the ſtrongeſt evidence, that we are now upon Trial. And the ſenſe of Revelation is abundantly confirmed by our circumſtances in life.

Our faculties are of the nobleſt kind, and we enjoy all manner of means for the cultivation of them; but not without great care, induſtry, and reſolution. So many are the occaſions of deception, and ſo eaſily are we miſled in our ſearches after the truth, that we cannot attain

to any clear or useful knowledge without a constant and cautious attention. Even Revelation, like the heavens themselves, is interspersed with clouds, things dark and hard to be understood. And when we have found the truth, the profession of it is attended with much inconvenience and trouble from the pride and malice of persecution. All which is wisely appointed; for, had all been plain, obvious, and easy, our integrity and sincere attachment to truth could not have been exercised and proved. The passions and appetites of the flesh; the possessions, gains, pleasures, and customs of the world; the calamities of life, diseases, disappointments, losses, dangers, enemies, fears, wants, weakness; all these are great embarrassments to virtue and piety, fatigue and solicit our minds from righteousness and purity, and oblige us to constant watchfulness and self-denial, in order to gain and secure the habits of holiness. Every condition, every possession is accompanied with its temptations. Wherever we are, we are in the midst of snares; and whatever we have carries some danger or other in it; insomuch that, without care and attention, we cannot preserve the purity of our minds, which yet, by the nature of things, and the command of God, we are obliged to do. This shews we are upon Trial, or in a state of discipline. For,

VII. *A State of Trial necessarily requires, that different and opposite interests* (as the flesh and the spirit, the law of God, and the law in our members, the present world, and a future state) *should so stand in competition for our affections and regards, as to oblige us to be very serious in considering, and thoroughly sincere in choosing and pursuing what is right and good.* And herein lies our Trial; whether we will follow God, or forsake him; prefer our mortal bodies before our immortal souls; the gratification of our lusts, before the purity and peace of our minds; the things of this transitory world, before the heavenly and eternal inheritance.

VIII. *The end and design of our Trial is to refine and exalt our nature.* James i. 12. *Blessed is the man that* worthily *endureth temptation; for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.* Heb. xii. 11. *No chastening for the present is joyous, but grievous; nevertheless,* &c. If indeed we are overcome by temptation, and drawn into a contempt of God, truth, and righteousness, we debase and destroy ourselves; we prove ourselves to be unfit for the happy society in heaven, forfeit the favour of God, and shall fall into perdition. But this must be our own fault. The noble intention of our Maker is, that we should overcome temptation, and then we are happy for ever. We have stood the test, we have passed honourably through our Trials; we have approved ourselves to God, as those whom he judges fit for preferment and happiness in his eternal kingdom. And shortly we shall hear, *Well done, good and faithful, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.* Hence our Trial is compared to that of silver and gold, *Job* xxiii. 10. *Psal.* lxvi. 10, 11. 1 *Pet.* i. 6, 7.

To explain Scripture language, we must distinguish between temptation of *Trial*, and *Seduction*. Temptation of *Trial*, or probation, God hath wisely ordained for the exercise and proof of our virtue. So he tempted *Abraham*, Gen. xxii. 1. Temptation of *seduction* is when we are drawn into sin, *James* i. 13. *Let no man say, when he is tempted,* seduced into sin by temptation.

From

From the preceding propoſitions we may draw the following concluſions.

COROL. 1. *Trials, of the ſevereſt kind, are no mark of God's diſpleaſure, nor any proof that we are under his wrath and curſe. Adam* in his ſtate of innocence was tried. The beſt of God's ſervants have gone through heavy Trials. Our Lord *was tempted in all points as we are, but without ſin*, Heb. iv. 15. *My ſon, deſpiſe not the chaſtening of the Lord; neither be weary of his correction. For whom the Lord loveth, he correcteth; even as a father the ſon in whom he delighteth.* Prov. iii. 11, 12.

COROL. 2. *The appetites and paſſions implanted in our conſtitution, are not the corruption of our nature, but means of our Trial.* And therefore we ſhall be freed from them, when that is over, 1 *Cor.* vi. 13. *Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats —— but God ſhall deſtroy both it and them ——* xv. 44. *It is ſown an animal body, it is raiſed a ſpiritual body.*

COROL. 3. *Whatever Trials may be the occaſion of ſin, may much more be the occaſion of virtue and holineſs.* Temptation may occaſion ſin, but is not the *cauſe* or reaſon of it; for, ſeeing no temptation can ever make it reaſonable to ſin, every temptation, if the ſinner chooſeth, may be rejected as unreaſonable. On the other hand, temptation is naturally an opportunity of exerting our virtue, and of gaining an honourable and glorious victory. Diſtreſſes and wants may fill our hearts with ſolicitude, and tempt us to murmur againſt God; but they have a tendency, being duly conſidered, to lead us to faith in him, and a humble patient ſubmiſſion to his will, the moſt perfect part of a worthy character. Wealth, honour, and power, may prove incentives to pride, luxury, and oppreſſion; but they may, and ought to be motives to gratitude, and means of greater uſefulneſs. Our appetites and paſſions may ſeduce to intemperance and debauchery; but they may be the occaſion of practiſing the moſt laudable ſelf-government and ſobriety. And ſo of all the reſt. *Rom.* v. 3. *We glory in tribulations; knowing that tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope*, that hope which *maketh not aſhamed*, or that ſhall never be diſappointed. *James* i. 2. *My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into temptations; knowing that the Trial of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing* to qualify you for the kingdom of heaven.

COROL. 4. *In a State of Trial natural evil hath a tendency to promote moral good.* For under any defects of happineſs, virtue may be exerciſed and increaſe. Hence it follows, (1.) That this life, notwithſtanding the afflictions which attend it, is *a day of ſalvation*, or a proper and valuable opportunity of attaining eternal life. (2) That the quantity of virtue in this preſent world is not to be meaſured by the joy it giveth the poſſeſſor, or the good it doth to others, but by the circumſtances of Trial under which it acteth and ſubſiſteth. For although all holineſs, by the will of God, will ſooner or later be crowned with joy; and always actually brings forth good works, in proportion to the agent's power and opportunities; yet two agents, of equal virtue, may be ſo differently ſituated in the creation, that the virtue of the one ſhall produce a thouſand times leſs comfort to its ſelf, and benefit to others, than the virtue of the other. Or, the ſame virtue which, in this life, brings forth but

one degree of joy and usefulness, in another world may bring forth a thousand degrees.

This stands upon two principles. 1. That holiness and happiness are essentially different, and connected only by the will of God. Hence it is, in fact, that many persons, truly virtuous and pious, have yet no comfort of their virtue. 2. The proper act of a moral agent stands in the will and choice alone, not in the external effect produced by it; and therefore the will, or choice, may be completely holy, where yet the outward act is hindered by contrary circumstances. Upon these grounds one may venture to affirm, that the virtue of *Lazarus*, which, under all his pains and poverty in our earth, brought forth but a small degree of joy and usefulness, might, in *Abraham*'s bosom, be equal to the virtue of an Angel in heaven, which actually brought forth ten thousand degrees. For as a cubical foot of our grosser air might possibly expand, and fill a cubical furlong in the higher and thinner region of pure *Ether*; so that virtue, which can subsist under the loads and clogs of our temptations and difficulties, though its present fruits are but small, may dilate and blaze out into a glory, magnificence, and splendour, equal to that of the holiest Angels. This the Apostle *Peter* intimates, 1 *Pet.* i. 7. The *tried faith* of persecuted Saints will *be found unto praise, and honour, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ.*

COROL. 5. *This world is not a State of Enjoyment.* He that made it, and Man in it, made it for Trial. We must not therefore dream of a continued course of ease, peace, and prosperity, but must expect to meet with Trials.

COROL. 6. *It is no matter in what temporal circumstances we are, if we do but acquit ourselves well and faithfully in the sight of God. Job*, under all his calamities, was not a worse man, or less the care and delight of Heaven. He was then like gold in the furnace, under the discipline of Divine Wisdom and Love, in order to his being purified into a condition more illustrious and excellent. You are in plenty and prosperity. What then? This is but an instance of your Trial, and your real happiness must be measured by the effects they have upon your mind. If prosperity disposes to thankfulness and good works, it is happy; but if it seduceth you to forget God, and to indulge irregular appetites, it is hurtful and pernicious. On the other hand, you are in affliction, want, trouble, pain. What then? This is not your fixed condition; it is only one instance of a temporary Trial, which shortly will be at an end. And if your afflictions work in you greater contempt of the world, self-denial, faith, submission, heavenly-mindedness, &c. your condition is happy, and your afflictions are really better for you than any other State you may fondly wish for. But observe, this is to be understood of afflictions brought upon us by Providence, and will not justify us in bringing them upon ourselves by any faulty criminal conduct. It is nevertheless our duty, by all lawful means, to procure the conveniencies and comforts of life,

CHAP. VIII.

CHAP. VIII.

Further Reflections on a State *of* Trial.

IT is of the laſt importance to have right notions of life, as a State of Trial. For thus the whole ſcene, otherwiſe confuſed and unaccountable, will appear in a juſt and rational light. Thus we ſhall be convinced, that our being is given us upon the moſt reaſonable and advantageous terms, for the higheſt and moſt excellent ends; and ſhall clearly underſtand what we have to do for the improvement and exaltation of it, free from the vain imaginations and purſuits, hopes and fears, joys and anxieties, which diſtract the minds of the unthinking and ignorant. What I have further to advance upon this point, is compriſed in the following propoſitions.

I. *It is a matter of great difficulty to adjuſt our Trials and ſuccours, ſo as not to overpower our faculties by either, but leave us in the free uſe of them.*

II. *God alone hath wiſdom ſufficient to appoint and adjuſt our Trials.* Becauſe he alone underſtands perfectly how to adapt them to the nature of our minds, and to the deſigns of his goodneſs. Whereas we know but little of the nature of our ſpirits, and therefore are not able to proportion temptations to our powers, nor helps and aſſiſtances to our temptations. We are not acquainted with the work we have to do in the future world, nor the ſeveral ſorts of beings with whom we may hereafter be concerned, in the way of fellowſhip or enmity; and therefore are by no means capable of judging, what ſort or degree of Trials are proper to give us ſuitable qualifications. For this reaſon, it is plainly our duty and wiſdom, humbly and patiently to ſubmit to the Trials God is pleaſed to allot, and to behave well and faithfully under them; without cenſuring, or quarrelling with his diſpoſals, which is fooliſh and impious. But though our underſtandings in this caſe are very defective, yet I conceive there are ſome general principles of which we may be, in a good meaſure, certain. As,

III. *The bias of Evil in our Trials ought to be ſtrong in proportion to the degree of virtue required of us.* For the degree of virtue is to be meaſured by the degree of temptation which it reſiſts. That virtue is but in a low degree, which can overcome but a ſmall temptation; that virtue is in a higher, which can overcome a ſtronger temptation; and that virtue is in the higheſt degree, which is ſuperior to all temptation.

IV. *The degree of Virtue God expects from us, is to be proportioned to the eminent ſtations to which we are to be exalted in his kingdom.* Or, we ſhall be exalted in proportion to the Virtue we have attained. *Mat.* xix. 28. *Luke* xix. 16, 17, 18, 19.

V. *Our Trial ſeems to be appointed for a State of Confirmation* —— and therefore the virtue we are to attain muſt be ſuch as will ſecure our perſeverance in it; which confirmation and perſeverance muſt ſtand, not

upon our being forcibly conſtrained to be virtuous, which is a contradiction, but upon the habits we have attained, or the ſettled good diſpoſitions of our minds. And it ſeems to be the great end of our Trial in this world, that we may attain to ſuch a degree of ſanctity, experienced in a variety of Trials, as in God's wiſdom appears to be of that genuine ſort, which ſhall eventually perſevere, and abide to all eternity. Of which matter our Lord ſpeaketh in this wiſe, *Luke* xvi. 10, 11, 12. *He that is faithful in that which is leaſt, is faithful alſo in much; and he that is unjuſt in the leaſt, is unjuſt alſo in much. If ye therefore have been unfaithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your truſt the true riches? And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's*, i. e. that which may at any uncertain time be taken from you, and therefore, for the ſake of which it is not worth your while to do a wrong or wicked thing, *who ſhall give you that which is your own* ?* what you are to poſſeſs for ever, or which you are never to be deprived of. This plainly ſhews, that we are qualified for honours and truſts in heaven, no otherwiſe than by our preſent faithfulneſs, or the real good qualities of our minds; and that we are now tried in a little, that we may be faithful in much.

VI. *The Judge of all the Earth hath certainly balanced our Trials with the greateſt exactneſs and equity, that temptation may not be too violent for our weakneſs, and yet ſtrong enough to put our virtue to its proper proof.* Fleſhly luſts war againſt the ſoul, but are conquered effectually by temperance, or keeping our bodies in ſubjection. The world allures our minds; but the world of glory is open to full view, to draw our regards thither. If the devil and his angels are permitted to practiſe his malice in perverting mankind, God hath ſent forth a holy and powerful Spirit to illuminate, ſanctify, ſtrengthen, and comfort; and hath ordered his Angels, in great numbers, to be miniſtring Spirits to the Heirs of Salvation. We may aſſure ourſelves, that we are upon a fair, and even favourable, Trial; for, if we do not neglect our advantages, the means of ſecuring our virtue, if we chooſe to be virtuous, do far ſurpaſs the occaſion of vice and ſin; and in all our conflicts more are with us, than are againſt us; God is with us.

VII. *Our Condition is well adapted to the purpoſes of moral Improvement.* If we conſider life as a State of Enjoyment, all is in confuſion and diſorder, and we are eaſily miſled into the moſt foul and fatal errors; but if we take life as a Trial, for the exerciſe of our virtue, in order to our future advancement, then every part of it will appear to be properly appointed. We have every day opportunities of ſhewing our ſincere regards to *God*, by giving him the preference to the many appetites and objects which court our affections, and come in competition with him.

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* ——— Nimium vobis Romana propago
Viſa potens, ſuperi, propria [*perpetua*] hæc ſi dona fuiſſent.
Æneid. vi. lin. 870.
Nihilne eſſe proprium [*perpetuum*] cuiquam?
Ter. Andr. Act. iv. Scen. 3. lin. 1.
Omne quod habemus, aut mutuum eſt, aut proprium.
Donat. in locum.

We have opportunities enough to learn what is sufficient for us to know. And the obscurities and difficulties in the way of *truth*, are not designed to debar us from it, but to exercise our integrity in our searches after it, and profession of it. All the calamities of life, pains of body, infirmities, seducements, losses, &c. are occasions of *purifying our hearts*, by sobriety, humility, repentance, self-denial, patience, &c. And for *social virtues*, we cannot suppose ourselves in any situation, where we should have more occasions, or more pressing motives to exercise every species of benevolence towards our fellow-creatures. And if our love to men must surmount both self-love, that deceitful principle in ourselves, and ingratitude, that ugly vice in others, hereby we are obliged to exercise, in the most generous, disinterested, and godlike manner, a virtue of the first rank, and the most necessary to preferment in God's creation. For he is the fittest for business and trust, under the universal Father, who most of all participates of his kind dispositions and goodwill towards the whole universe of beings.

VIII. *Different persons, as they have different capacities, advantages, and opportunities, and are in different circumstances, conditions, and situations, are under different Trials.* Mat xxv. 15. Luke xii. 47, 48.

IX. *God allots to every particular person his Trial.* He gives our capacities and opportunities, assigns our circumstances and outward condition, and measures our afflictions and comforts. Therefore, whatever our Trials may be, this should calm our uneasy minds, that they are meted out to us by the same wise Hand which created and governs universal Nature.

X. *Every one will be judged, and receive reward or punishment according to the circumstances of his own particular Trial*; and all things relating to it, all advantages and disadvantages, will be weighed in the exactest balance, and determined accordingly. *Luke* xii. 47, 48. *That servant which knew his Lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that* was in different circumstances, and *knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes.* Here observe, that God fully understands the degrees of the guilt, or virtue of particular persons; but we do not, and therefore should be cautious in judging.

XI. *There are degrees of Trial*; or temptation may be more or less intense. The sufferings of the flesh may be raised to such an height of anguish and terror, or its passions so inflamed, as to suspend the use of thought and reason.

XII. *God can raise or sink our Trial as he pleases.* When he sees fit, he can give a calm and quiet state; and when he pleaseth can raise storms about us, and heat the furnace of temptation seven times more than it was wont to be heated. *Job*, in his Trial by prosperity, acquitted himself well; and under great pains and poverty, he sinned not, nor charged God foolishly. But at length, through the unkind usage of his friends, and perhaps some other concurring circumstances, his Trial began to be so hard, that he opened his mouth, and cursed his day. Whenever the Almighty pleaseth, he can permit a Trial that will shake the strongest faith. Therefore,

XIII. *No good resolutions or dispositions, no degrees of spiritual strength to which*

which we have attained, is an absolute security, that we shall be for the future steadfast and unmoveable. New, or sudden Trials, stronger than any we have hitherto met with, may shake and stagger the stability of our minds. Let no man imagine, that his former victories will exempt him from a possibility of falling. It is the will of God, that every man, the best of men, in this State, should be under a constant necessity of watching. *Wherefore, let us take unto ourselves the whole armour of God, that we may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done,* or overcome, *all to stand.* Eph. vi. 13.

XIV. *All Trial is attended with danger.* And therefore some, if not many, in a State of Trial, may fall into perdition; as wicked angels and men.

XV. *Our danger is not from God, but from ourselves. God tempteth,* or seduceth into sin, *no man,* Jam. i. 13, 14, 15: for this very good reason, because he *cannot* himself *be tempted with evil,* such is his abhorrence and detestation of it; and therefore cannot be inclined to draw any of his creatures into the practice of it. *But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away* from righteousness, *by his own lust,* and *enticed* to commit sin.

XVI. *All temptation is vincible to those that are willing to overcome.* See Prop. VI. All the admonitions, exhortations, encouragements in Scripture, suppose and support the truth of this proposition.

XVII. *We are victorious over temptation, not by our own power, but by the grace and power of God.* Even when *the spirit is willing, the flesh is weak.* Mark xiv. 38. We are indeed under the highest obligations to use faithfully the powers we have already received, and no otherwise may we hope to be superior to temptation: but it is not our own wisdom or strength that can preserve and uphold us; for we are directed in Revelation to trust in God, and to seek unto him for succour and deliverance; which would be impertinent, were we sufficient to ourselves. Why should we ask help, when we do not want it? God alone *is able to keep* us *from falling, and to stablish us in every good work.* Jude 24. 2 Thess. ii. 16, 17. And we are abundantly assured, that he will give strength in proportion to our Trials, and our faithful endeavours; and that our future honours will be great in proportion to the present greater Trials we have surmounted. If we have overcome much, we shall enjoy much. For, observe, the succours of Divine Grace do not diminish the quantity of our virtue, or reward. Whatever helps our infirmity may require, our virtue is measured by our own sincere desires and endeavours, to which the Divine Aid is proportioned. So that, in moral construction, it is all one as if we had overcome in our own strength.

XVIII. *The means of conquering Temptation, on our part, are Watching and Prayer.* Mark xiv. 38. *Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation.* (1.) *Watch.* Be not secure; expect temptation, and be sensible of the danger of it, the greatest of all dangers, the loss of the soul. Be not confident of your own strength. Keep out of the way of temptation. Avoid every snare that may intangle your minds. Indulge to no dangerous liberties; make no uncautious approaches towards folly and sin. That may be affected by slow degrees, which a man would never

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t first have consented to be guilty of. He that fears falling down a precipice, will be sure not to come near it; and he that would extinguish he fire, should withdraw the fuel. Keep thy heart with all diligence; eject every sinful thought and suggestion. Keep the body in subjection o reason and religion by self-denial and abstinence. Beware of an unlue attachment to the world. Your life and treasure is in heaven; and here let your hearts be. Let the word of God dwell in you richly by daily meditation. *Psal.* cxix. 11. *Thy word have I hid in mine heart, hat I might not sin against thee.* (2.) *Pray.* Not that we may be totally exempted from temptation; for we came into the world for this very end, that we might be tried and tempted. We cannot reasonably expect that God, in our favour, should alter the constitution of the world, or of the human nature; but we should pray, that God would order our Trials in such manner as will best promote the purity and probity of our lives. *Prov.* xxx. 8, 9. *Remove far from me vanity and lies; give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me,* &c. The wise man doth not prescribe any condition that did not belong to him; but, in general, is desirous of that situation in life which God saw would be most favourable to his piety and integrity. *Lead us not,* suffer us not to *enter, into temptation,* i. e. suffer us not to fall under the power and prevalence of temptation. The example of our Lord is of the greatest force to direct and animate us in our conflicts; he took upon him our nature, and went through all our Trials, on purpose to shew us how to behave under them; and to assure us that, imitating his example, we shall at length be partakers of his glory. And thus by his perfect *obedience,* his obedience unto death, a sacrifice highly pleasing to God, he recovered that life and immortality which *Adam* forfeited by his *disobedience.*

CHAP. IX.

Of Law, or the religious DISPENSATION ADAM *and* EVE *were under in the* GARDEN.

GEN. ii. 17. *But of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die.* This is *Law*; clear ideas of which are necessary to the right understanding of St. *Paul*'s writings.

Law is a rule of action, or duty, commanding or prohibiting, given by the Sovereign to moral Agents, with the penalty of death annexed. *Transgress and die*, is the language of Law. And therefore every transgressor, the moment he is such, is dead in law; and, for any thing in Law, he must continue so, as long as it is true that he has violated the Law, that is, for evermore. For the Law, which condemns him, can give him no relief;

relief; as, in its own nature, it excludes repentance and pardon; neither of which can take place, unless Law is overruled, or the execution of it suspended by the authority and favour of the Sovereign. For Law would not be Law, if its sense or language were this, *the transgressor, who doth not repent and obtain pardon, shall die*; seeing this would be to allow transgression by Law, upon the uncertain conditions of repentance, and the Sovereign's mercy. "You may sin with impunity, if you do but "repent, and find favour." And so the Law would be invalidated by itself, as it would allow a conditional transgression, which would annul the annexed penalty, by suspending the execution of it for ever, in expectation of the sinner's repentance, and the Sovereign's forgiveness; for, as the sinner may possibly repent in any future time to all eternity, so the Law could not at any time be executed. Consequently the Law, by this means, would be rendered for ever insignificant, as it might be violated for ever with impunity. Therefore, to be consistent with itself, Law must must be conceived in absolute terms, *sin and die*, subjecting every sinner immediately to the penalty of death, which is the *curse of the Law*. Gal. iii. 10, 13. By this rule the Apostle, having proved that all flesh have sinned, concludes, that *no flesh*, or no part of mankind, *can be justified*, or entitled to life, before the Sovereign, by deeds or works of Law. *Rom.* iii. 20. For *the Law works wrath*, or subjects the transgressor to death, the curse or penalty of it, *Rom.* iv. 15. On which account it is very properly called, *the ministration*, dispensation, or constitution, *of death*, 2 Cor. iii. 7. as it is a constitution which affords nothing but rigid condemnation for all transgressors.

Hence it follows, that death in *Law* is death eternal, without hopes of a revival or resurrection. For, as before proved, it is the very nature of Law, never to remit the penalty or forfeiture. The Law which now condemns the criminal, condemns him to death absolutely, and for evermore; the everlasting language of Law to every one that breaks it, and for every breach and transgression, being this, *Thou shalt die*. And this is the force of the expression מות תמות *moriendo morieris*, "in "dying thou shalt die," in the Law given to *Adam*. It doth not speak of the certainty of the event, as if he should certainly die the day he transgressed, for the event shews the contrary; nor that he should become mortal from a change in his constitution, which is a random conjecture, without any foundation in the nature of his constitution, which was created mortal, or in the force of the words. For the phrase מות תמות is an Hebraism, importing that a thing is, or is done, thoroughly, totally, in the most perfect manner, or the most intense degree, and is to be interpreted according to the nature of the subject. As *Gen.* ii. 16. אכל תאכל *comedendo comedes*, "thou mayest freely eat," without any restraint. *Chap.* xxxvii. 33. טרף טרף יוסף *discerpendo discerptus est Joseph*, "*Joseph* is torn all to pieces," or most cruelly torn to pieces. *Exod.* xxi. 19. ורפא ירפא *et medicando medicabitur*, "and shalt cause him to be thoroughly healed." Thus the force of the words, "in dying "thou shalt die," is this, thou shalt thoroughly, utterly, totally die, or die for ever, without coming to life again. Thou hast justly forfeited

cited thy life and being, and shalt suffer a total and eternal extinction of it.

This sense and language of Law must be understood only as a declaration, that the penalty is just and due; which is all that can be done by Law as a rule of justice, declaring, in general, that he who is disobedient to his Maker hath justly forfeited his being; and that, in consequence of his disobedience, his Maker may justly deprive him of it. The Law can only declare the truth of this denunciation, as it hath no power to put it in execution: the execution of this threatening must necessarily and entirely rest in the hands and power of the Lawgiver; who therefore may mitigate, respite, or suspend it, as he, judging of circumstances, shall in his wisdom think proper. This is the prerogative of the Sovereign or Lawgiver, which is allowed to be fit and reasonable all the world over. For, if this were not allowed, in proper cases, there could be no such thing as pardon, or the mitigation of the sentence of Law, either with God or man; which in every nation, and throughout the whole universe, would be a state of things the most severe and the most dreadful.

Thus room is made for the exercise of favour or *grace*, without doing any violence to truth. The penalty indeed is due; but according to the true natures of things, there may be alleviating circumstances in the case of the transgressor, which, though Law can make no provision for them without destroying itself, yet the Lawgiver may, and, in reason and truth, ought to consider and allow, with respect to the infliction of the penalty: *Wisdom* and *goodness* ought to have place in him, and certainly do take place in God, as well as *justice*. Justice consists in executing the penalty of the Law according to the *letter* of it; which *letter* (2 Cor. iii. 6.) *killeth*, or destroys, the sinner, by subjecting him to eternal death, or to a total extinction of life; according to which rule, there could be no place for mercy, and the whole world must be ruined. But *wisdom* and *goodness* may mitigate the rigour of this constitution, not by abrogating the Law, as a rule of life; for so *the Law is holy, and the commandment is holy, just and good*, (Rom. vii. 12.) and can never be abrogated, being, in its general intention, agreeable to the everlasting and immutable nature of things: much less by finding out some expedient to satisfy *Law* and *justice*, which can be satisfied no other way than by the death of the offender; for justice, as used in this case, is acting strictly according to Law.

Nothing, therefore, but the execution of the Law can satisfy Justice. The wisdom and goodness of the Sovereign may do what the Law cannot do; that is to say, may suspend the execution of the sentence as long as he shall think fit; and so may leave what space he pleases for the sinner's repentance, and provide what means he shall think proper to induce him to repentance; and upon his repentance, may restore him to the assurance of eternal life, by an eternal suspension of the execution of the Law. For as to that, he cannot be limited to any space of time. If he hath a right by prerogative to suspend at all, it must be a discretionary right to suspend as long as he chooseth. This is *grace*, or *gospel*; by which

which the ſinner may be reſtored to the hope of immortality, an actually inveſted in it, by the wiſdom and favour of the Lawgiver. Th *new*, or remedying conſtitution, the Apoſtle calls *ſpirit*, which quicken the ſinner condemned to death by the *letter* of the Law, or makes hi to live. 2 Cor. iii. 6. *Who alſo hath made us* [Apoſtles] *able miniſters the New Teſtament* [or conſtitution], *not of the letter but the ſpirit*; *for t letter kills, but the ſpirit giveth life.* Which ſpirit, he informs u ver. 17, is *the Lord*, or the Goſpel of our Lord. *Now the Lord is th ſpirit*, that life-giving ſpirit, or the latter *Adam*, who is *a quickenin* or life-giving, *ſpirit*, 1 Cor. xv. 45.

That the penalty, *in the day that thou eateſt thereof, thou ſhalt ſurely*, utterly, *die*, is to be underſtood, not of the event, as if he ſhould cer tainly die, but of the demerit of tranſgreſſion, that he would deſerve t die; and that, notwithſtanding this threatening, the Sovereign migh reſpite the execution of it, and not only allow the tranſgreſſor the benef of repentance, but alſo appoint means to lead him to repentance, and t eternal life; may be clearly proved from *Ezek.* iii. 18. xxxiii. 8, 11, 14 15. Where God repeats the very ſame ſentence of the Law upon th wicked perſon, whom yet, at the ſame time, he charges the Prophet t warn, in order to bring him to repentance, promiſing pardon and life i caſe he did repent. *Ezek.* iii. 18. *When* [באמרי *in dicendo me*, whereas *I ſay* [in the Law] *unto the wicked* מות תמות *thou ſhalt ſurely die*; *an thou giveſt him not warning, nor ſpeakeſt to warn the wicked from his wicke way to ſave his life.* Chap. xxxiii. 8. *When* [whereas] *I ſay* [in the Law *unto the wicked, O wicked man,* מות תמות *thou ſhalt ſurely* [utterly] *di if thou doſt not ſpeak to warn the wicked from his way*, &c. Ver. 14. *Again when* [whereas] *I ſay* [in the Law] *unto the wicked,* מות תמות *tho ſhalt ſurely* [totally] *die*; *if he turn from his ſin, and do that which is lawfu and right*, ver. 15. — חיו יחיה לא ימות vivendo vivet, *he ſhall ſurel* [totally, eternally] *live, he ſhall not die.*

Thus Law in the rigorous ſenſe is to be underſtood; and thus it ſtand in connexion with the pardon of tranſgreſſors, or their attainment t eternal life through the favour of the Lawgiver. That our firſt parent while in the garden of *Eden*, were under Law, or a rule of Action wit the penalty of death annexed, is manifeſt from the very form of the pro hibition——*But of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil thou ſhalt n eat of it*; *for in the day thou eateſt thereof, thou ſhalt utterly die.* And th Apoſtle *Paul* evidently ſuppoſes, that *Adam* was under Law, *Rom.* v. 13 14. *For until the law* [of Moſes] *ſin was* [committed] *in the world*; *bu ſin* [though committed] *is not imputed* [unto death] μη οντος νομου *whe Law is not in being.* This ſuppoſes, 1. That Law is the only conſtitu tion which ſubjecteth the ſinner to death. 2. That Law was not in be ing in the times preceding the giving of the Law of *Moſes*. ver. 14 *Nevertheleſs death reigned from Adam to Moſes* [while Law was not i being], *even over them that had not ſinned after the likeneſs of Adam's tranſgreſ ſion.* That is to ſay, "Death reigned all the long ſpace of about 250 "years from *Adam* to *Moſes*, even over thoſe who did not ſin, as *Ada* "did, againſt Law, making death the penalty of their ſin; becauſe du "ring that period mankind were not under Law, but under the genera

"covenant

'covenant, or constitution, of grace, given to *Adam* immediately after 'his transgression."

This evidently supposes, that *Adam* was under Law with the penalty of death annexed, while he was in the garden, or before he transgressed; and that the same severe constitution was again revived by *Moses*, after it had been suspended from the time of *Adam*'s transgression till the Law was given by *Moses*. Whence the Apostle concludeth, that, as Death reigned all that long period, while sin was committed in the world, and yet no positive Law subsisted, making death the penalty of sin, he concludes, I say, that men, in general, did not die for their own transgressions, but in consequence of *Adam*'s one transgression.

It must be observed, that the Apostle *Paul* doth not always use *Law* in the rigid sense, but sometimes for the whole Jewish Code, or the Old Testament. *Rom.* iii. 19; sometimes for any inward principle which influenceth and governeth a man——vii. 23; sometimes for a rule in general——iii. 27; and sometimes for a rule of action, with the penalty of death annexed. *Rom.* v. 20. vi. 15. vii. 4, &c.

CHAP. X.

Of the INSTITUTION *of* MARRIAGE.

Gen. ii. 18, to the End.

ADAM's calling all beasts and fowls by names doth not imply, that he had a perfect knowledge of the natures and intrinsic qualities of all animals; an opinion destitute of all evidence; but that God gave him dominion over them, as a master over his bond-servants, according to the force of the phrase, *to call things or persons by name.* Psal. cxlvii. 4. Isai. xl. 26. xliii. 1. God allowing *Adam* to give the creatures what names he pleased, was the form of conveying or making over to him the property of them, and dominion over them. It hath also reference to the formation of woman; that *Adam*, our first parent, having surveyed all other animals, and having observed that they were created in pairs, for the propagation of their several kinds, might be sensible of his own solitary, destitute condition, and of the importance of his being also provided of a mate suitable to his nature, (which, by reason of its superior excellency, could not be matched with any of the brutal kind) a companion in body and mind, fit to cohabit with him, for mutual converse, delight, comfort, and assistance, especially for propagating the human species; without which the world would have been stocked with only brutes.

And it was fitting, or agreeable to the true nature of things, that the formation of the first woman should be attended with some circumstance expressive of the nearness of that relation which was to be the fountain of the

the existence of all mankind, and of all the near and dear relations so beneficial and comfortable to the life of man; and no circumstance could do that more significantly, than taking the woman out of a part of the man's body. Thus she became another self; and this was intended as a document to all posterity, that a wife should be regarded and treated as such. *Ephes.* v. 28. *So ought men to love their wives, as their own bodies; he that loveth his wife, loveth himself.*

Ver. 23. *And* [when the Lord God brought to him the woman, his wife, and informed him in what manner she was produced] *Adam said,* [with much satisfaction and joy] *this is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh,* the dearest to me of all creatures! *she shall be called* אשה *Woman, because she is taken out of* איש *Man* [a sign of *Adam*'s property in her], *ver.* 24. And the Lord God said, (*Mat.* xix. 4, 5.) *Therefore shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh.* Thus marriage was instituted; a sacred and honourable ordinance, of high distinction, as it is very nearly connected with the dignity and happiness of the human nature.

And by making only one woman for one man, God plainly declared, that this relation ought to subsist between two; as the Prophet well argues, *Mal.* ii. 14, 15. *And did not he,* God, *make* but *one* couple, one man and one woman, as a rule to all mankind, that should descend from them? *yet had he the residue of the spirit,* and could then have created more men and women, if promiscuous conversation had been for the greater happiness of the world. *And wherefore* did he make but *one* couple? *That he might seek a godly seed,* זרע אלהים an excellent seed; that man and wife, in chaste wedlock, in sincere and undivided affection, might propagate a posterity to the honour and service of God. This is an argument against polygamy and divorce, confirmed by our Lord's wisdom and authority, *Mat.* xix. 3, 4, 5, 6. Thus mankind are brought into the world in a way suitably to the excellency of their nature. For, considering how weak and imperfect our infancy is, and in how great ignorance and dissoluteness of manners we must necessarily grow up to manhood, without good discipline and instruction, it is evident this world must have been the most wild and disorderly scene imaginable, were the race of mankind propagated in a vagrant, licentious manner, without parents to own them, and by their tender care and affection to give them a good education. The production of an intelligent being, in the most helpless and exposed circumstances, and which grows up to a due degree of understanding, no otherwise than by good culture, ought to be attended with all the proper advantages in the propagator's power. And therefore the propagation of the human species, according to the true nature of things, ought to be guarded and directed by the best exercise of reason, and not left to be done in a loose, brutal manner. God did not create man in jest; nor should the ordinary generation of a man be made a matter of lewd jest, or of lawless passion. This is the rationale of marriage, and of modesty and sobriety.

Adam had no choice, but his descendants have great need to exercise prudence in the choice of a relation so important and lasting. The advice and approbation of parents is, in this case, one of the best rules.

And

And as marriage leſſens the intereſts of parents in their children, it is generally not dutiful to alienate it to another without their knowledge and conſent: nor ſhould parents unreaſonably oppoſe the lawful inclinations of their children.

Ver. 25. *And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not aſhamed,* being free from ſin and guilt.

CHAP. XI.

Of the TEMPTER *who deceived* EVE.

Gen. iii. 1——9.

HERE *Eve* is deceived and tempted to tranſgreſs the law of God by ſome moral agent, who could ſpeak and argue, called by *Moſes* הנחש *the Serpent*; which, he ſaith, *was more ſubtle than any other beaſt of the field which the Lord God had made.* But a beaſt of the field, how ſubtle or ſagacious ſoever, could not ſpeak and reaſon. Who then was the moral agent that deceived *Eve?* St. *Paul*, 2 Cor. xi. 3. ſpeaks of the deceiver in the ſame manner as *Moſes* doth; *I fear, leſt by any means, as the Serpent beguiled Eve through his ſubtilty, ſo your minds ſhould be corrupted from the ſimplicity that is in Chriſt.* The Apoſtle did not ſuppoſe the *Corinthians* might be corrupted by the ſubtilty of an irrational creature; conſequently, he did not ſuppoſe that *Eve* was beguiled by the ſubtilty of an irrational creature. But St. *John* comes nearer to the point in *Rev.* xii. 9. xx. 2. where he ſpeaks of the Serpent as a *deceiver*, and deſcribes him after this manner, *and the great dragon was caſt out, that old Serpent; called* otherwiſe in Scripture, *the Devil and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world.* A *dragon* is a huge overgrown ſerpent. *That old Serpent*, means that Serpent which of old, at the beginning of the world, deceived *Eve*, and ſtill was deceiving the world. (And in ſeveral other places of Scripture, which we ſhall preſently have occaſion to take notice of, the Devil's temptation of *Eve* is plainly alluded to.) Therefore this *Serpent*, and the *Devil* and *Satan*, are ſynonymous, and mean one and the ſame being. Hence divines have juſtly concluded, that it was the *Devil* or *Satan*, an evil or malignant ſpirit, which tempted *Eve*, in the body, or aſſuming the form and ſhape, of a Serpent; which then might be a very beautiful as well as ſagacious animal, familiar with *Adam* and *Eve*, and much admired by them.

That there are wicked and malignant ſpirits, is undeniably true, from Scripture. 2 *Pet.* ii. 4. *For if God ſpared not the Angels that ſinned, but σειραις ζοφου ταρταρωσας caſt them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkneſs, to be reſerved unto judgment.* [Or rather, caſt them down into a low, wretched condition, in chains of darkneſs, delivered them to be reſerved

unto judgment.] *Jude* 6. *And the Angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved* δεσμοις αιδιοις υπο ζοφον *in everlasting chains under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day.* Being *cast down to hell, and delivered into chains of darkness*, in St. *Peter*, is the same as *being reserved in perpetual chains under darkness*, in St. *Jude*; and may signify no more than, that they are degraded from their former high and glorious state, and chained, or confined to, a much lower, narrower, and darker situation, without any hope of favour, unto the day of judgment; when they, with all workers of iniquity, shall be cast into everlasting fire, *Mat.* xxv. 41. *Rev.* xx. 10, 15. For any thing therefore advanced in those two places, those fallen angels may at present reside in our air, and be permitted to wander about in the earth.

It must be observed, that there is an ambiguity in both the words, שטן *Satan*, and Διαβολος the *Devil*. The former, *Satan*, signifies any adversary among men and good angels, as well as among evil spirits. *Num.* xxii. 32. *And the Angel of the Lord said,——behold, I went out to withstand thee,* יצאתי לשטן for an adversary, a Satan. So 2 Sam. xix. 22.——*Ye sons of Zeruiah are adversaries.* 1 Kin. v. 4. xi. 14. 23, 25. Psal. lxxi. 13. cix. 20, 29. *Peter* was Satan, an adversary, to our Lord, *Mat.* xvi. 23. And the unbelieving *Jews* were the Satan, or adversaries, who hindered St. *Paul*'s return to *Thessalonica*, 1 Thess. ii. 18. Διαβολος, *Devil*, signifies an accuser, slanderer. *Joh.* vi. 70. —— *and one of you*, Judas, *is* Διαβολος *a Devil.* 1 Tim. iii. 11. *Their wives must be grave,* μη Διαβολας not Devils, *i. e.* accusers, *slanderers.* 2 Tim. iii. 3. *false accusers*, Tit. ii. 3. Thus it may be applied to any wicked persons, who slander, accuse, and persecute the people of God. And this ambiguity in the sense of those two words, שטן and Διαβολος, may render it doubtful how some particular passages of Scripture are to be understood.

That those two words are used to signify one and the same wicked spirit, who, with many others his angels, or under-agents, are conversant in our world, and endeavour to draw men into sin, and do mischief among us, is very evident from Revelation. As in the case of our first parents, of *Job*, whose children and substance were destroyed, and his body afflicted with a grievous disorder by *Satan*, Job i. 12, &c. ii. 6, 7; of our Lord, who was tempted of the *Devil*, or *Satan*, Mat. iv. 1, 3, 10. Mark i. 13. Luke iv. 2. Which temptation, under all its circumstances, can never be resolved into an allegory; much less can it be supposed to be all transacted within our Lord's own mind, as if the Devil, or Satan, was no other than the suggestions, or thoughts, that arose in his own heart, which is very absurd. Nor can the following texts be naturally understood of any other than a real Devil or Satan. *Mat.* xiii. 39. *The enemy that sowed the tares is the Devil*, [and his instruments] Mark iii. 26. *How can Satan cast out Satan?* Joh. viii. 44. *Ye are of your father the Devil.* Acts x. 38. —— *Healing all that were oppressed of the Devil.* 2 Cor. xi. 13, 14. *For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the Apostles of Christ. And no marvel, for Satan himself is transformed into an Angel of Light.* Heb. ii. 14. *That through death he might destroy him that had the power of* [subjecting our first parents,

and

and their posterity, to] *death, that is, the Devil.* 2 Tim. ii. 16. —— *recover themselves out of the snare of the Devil.* Jam. iv. 7. *Resist the Devil, and he shall flee from you.* 1 Joh. iii. 8. *He that committeth sin, is of the Devil; for the Devil sinneth from the beginning* [of the world, alluding to his tempting our first parents into sin;] *for this cause the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the Devil.* Jude 9. *Yet Michael, the Archangel, when contending with the Devil, he disputed about the body of Moses.* And generally, *Satan* and *Devil* are thus to be understood in the New Testament, the few places before mentioned only excepted: though, where the Devil is principally intended, his instruments, or wicked agents among men, may at the same time be connoted.

Besides Satan, or the Devil, the Scripture frequently mentions other evil spirits, called δαιμονια, δαιμονες, *Dæmons*, which we translate *Devils*. That these Dæmons, however understood in profane authors, do belong to the Devil's retinue, and may be his angels or under-agents, over whom he is chief or prince, will appear by comparing *Mat.* xii. 22, 24, —— 28. *Luke* x. 17, 18. xi. 15, 18. Those who in the Gospels are said to be δαιμονιζομενοι possessed by Dæmons, in *Acts* x. 38. are said to be *oppressed of the Devil*, υπο του Διαβολου, as they were under the power of his agents. Thus we may conceive of *the Devil and his angels*, Mat. xxv. 41. *the Dragon and his angels*, Rev. xii. 7. He is the prince and head, and those dæmons are his subjects. They are often spoken of in the plural number, as being many; though *Satan*, or the *Devil*, is always in the singular, as being but one single spirit, and chief over all the rest. But, as before observed, his angels, or agents, may sometimes be included with him.

The characters which the Devil or Satan sustains in Scripture, are these, the *great Dragon*, or fierce Devourer, the *old Serpent*, full of villainous subtilty, *Rev.* xii. 9. The *Wicked One*, Mat. xiii. 38. 1 Joh. iii. 12. A *Murtherer and Liar*, Joh. viii. 44. *Ye are of your father, the Devil, and the lusts of your father will ye do. He was a murtherer from the beginning*, [in effecting the death of *Adam* and his posterity; and thus he may be said to have had the power of death, *Heb.* ii. 14.] *and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own, for he is a liar*, [as he was to *Eve*] *and the father of it. The Accuser of the Brethren*, Rev. xii. 10. [See Job i. 6——13. ii. 1——7.] *A roaring Lion*, [the lion roars only when he is hungry, Psal. xxii. 13. Ezek. xxii. 25.] *seeking whom he may devour.* The *Prince of the World*, meaning, as it is corrupt and wicked, *John* xii. 31. xiv. 30. xvi. 11. *The Prince of the Power of the Air, the Spirit that now worketh in the Children of Disobedience*, the idolatrous heathen, *Ephes.* ii. 2. Here the Devil is represented as a prince, or sovereign, at the head of a kingdom which stands in opposition to, and is at war with, the kingdom of *Christ*; who was manifested as his antagonist, *that he might destroy the works of the Devil*, 1 John iii. 8.

The Dæmons are characterized as the *Devil's angels*, Mat. xxv. 41. As *unclean Spirits*, Mark v. 2, 8, 12. Luke iv. 33, 36. viii. 27, 29. *Evil*, wicked, *Spirits*, Luke viii. 2.

Theſe vicious ſpirits, the Devil and his angels, when permitted, are capable of doing any miſchief to the eſtate, body, or mind, 1 *Sam.* xvi. 14. *Job* i. 12, &c. ii. 6, 7. *Mark* iii. 23, 26. *Luke* xiii. 16. 1 *Cor.* v. 5. 1 *Tim.* i. 20. Nor is there any abſurdity, any thing inconſiſtent with the Divine Goodneſs, in ſuppoſing that evil ſpirits may inflict calamities and diſorders upon mankind: for they are only inſtruments in God's hands, under his direction and controul, as much as any other cauſe whatever; and ſo muſt come under the ſame rules as any other means which Providence may employ in diſtreſſing or deſtroying human life, as ſtorms, inundations, the paſſions and powers of wicked men, a putrid air, vitiated humours in the body, &c. In all theſe caſes, whatever is the inſtrumental, God is the appointing and directing cauſe; and it would have been all one, whether he had ſent a good or evil angel, or had only changed the temperature of the air, to deſtroy the *Iſraelites* by peſtilence, 2 *Sam.* xxiv. 15, 16; or to ſlay *Sennacherib*'s army, 2 *King.* xix. 35. 2 *Chron.* xxxii. 21. In correcting or puniſhing by diſeaſes, or other diſtreſſes, God may uſe what inſtruments he pleaſes.

Thus far we may go upon this part of the ſubject, and not much further. The world of ſpirits lies ſo far out of our ſight, that we can know no more of them, than what is revealed; nor have we principles ſufficient to enable us to form clear and complete notions of every thing ſaid concerning them even in Revelation.

That which moſt of all requires our attention, is, that the Devil delighteth in ſeducing mankind to ſin againſt God, and takes every advantage, and uſes every wile to effect his wicked purpoſe. *Rev.* xii. 9. *The great dragon, called the Devil and Satan, deceiveth the whole world.* Mat. xiii. 39. *The enemy that ſowed them*, the tares, *i. e.* wicked men, *is the Devil.* Of which we have a ſpecimen in his temptation of our firſt parents. He concealed himſelf in the body, or ſhape, of a Serpent, probably at that time a creature admired by *Adam* and *Eve* for its beauty and ſagacity. He firſt addreſſed the woman, when alone, and at a diſtance from her huſband; and firſt endeavoured to weaken her ſenſe of the obligation of the Divine Prohibition, by repreſenting it as uncertain or unreaſonable, *ver.* 1. *Yea, hath God ſaid, ye ſhall not eat of every tree in the garden?* "Surely you miſtake him; it can never be ſo; for why ſhould "God debar you of any of the innocent and delightful fruits this gar-"den yields?" The woman expoſed herſelf to the greateſt danger by deliberating with the Tempter, upon a matter which ſhe ſhould not have heard ſo much as called in queſtion without abhorrence. But ſhe was not aware of his wicked deſign; and therefore, in much ſimplicity, gave him a full account of the law they were under, *ver.* 2, 3. Which only gave him, on the other hand, an opportunity of contradicting it by a moſt bold and impudent lie, *ver.* 4. *Ye ſhall not ſurely die.* Yea, he aſſures her, they ſhould receive great advantage by eating the forbidden fruit, *ver.* 5. *For God doth know, that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes ſhall be opened; and ye ſhall be as Gods, knowing good and evil.* To favour his aſſertion, he perverts the word of God, by wreſting the name God had given the tree; as if it had been called the *Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil*, becauſe God was aware it would endow them with the moſt exalted and extenſive knowledge; whereas it had its name upon a very different account.

Thus

Thus Satan perſuades men to have hard thoughts of God, as if he envied our happineſs, and laid the reſtraints of his law upon our appetites out of ill-will; but infinite Goodneſs is not capable of envy. Thus he tempteth us to be uneaſy in the condition Providence has allotted us, and prompts us to be ambitious of things too high for us. And thus he deludeth with falſe hopes of benefit and advantage from ſin; and, when this laſt point is gained, we fall an eaſy prey to the Tempter. *ver.* 6. *And when the woman ſaw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleaſant to the eyes, and a tree to be deſired to make one wiſe, ſhe took of the fruit thereof, and did eat.* "She ſaw it was to be deſired to make one wiſe." What wrought this opinion in *Eve* was, poſſibly, the aſſurance the Serpent gave her, that he which, ſhe very well knew, before was, like other brutes, dumb and irrational, was, by the admirable virtue of the fruit, advanced in ſpeech and reaſon, as ſhe ſaw, to an equality with herſelf, the moſt excellent creature in the earth; and, therefore, ſhe needed not doubt but it would, in the ſame proportion, exalt the human nature to the high perfection of the angelic order. This would paſs for demonſtration with her, who knew not that it was an evil ſpirit that acted and ſpake in the Serpent. But this is only my own conjecture.—*And ſhe gave alſo unto her huſband with her, and he did eat:* being, probably, perſuaded (beſides the arguments the Serpent uſed with *Eve*) by the ſtrong affection they had for each other. Thus the Devil, by tempting our firſt parents to tranſgreſs the law, ſubjected them, and their poſterity in them, to eternal death. Thus he was a murtherer, and may be ſaid to have *had the power of death.* Heb. ii. 14.

CHAP. XII.

Reflections on the DEVIL'S TEMPTATIONS.

BY ſearching the Scriptures we have found, that there is a malicious Spirit which, by Divine Permiſſion, ranges about this world, attended with many more of the ſame depraved nature; and, as any opportunity offers, is endeavouring to draw men from the practice of virtue, into all wickedneſs and alienation from the truth.

To prevent any cavils againſt the ſcriptural account of this wicked Spirit, let it be well obſerved,

I. That we cannot be ſure, from any unaſſiſted knowledge or obſervation of our own, that this earth is not frequented by numerous ſpirits of a nature much ſuperior to the human. Our knowledge even of the animals which naturally belong to our globe, hath been, and probably ſtill is, very defective. Without the help of microſcopes, we could never have diſcerned vaſt tribes of inſects, which we now plainly ſee do live

and move even in our own bodies, and in all parts of the earth and water; and even with this advantage of sight, there may still be a world of smaller animals, which our senses cannot reach. Much more may myriads of spirits be mixed amongst us, which come not under our observation. Therefore, as without the aid of microscopes we should never have discovered the most numerous part of the inhabitants of our earth; so neither, without the light of Revelation, can we be ascertained, what spirits are and act in the region of the air. And Revelation is a mean as proper, at least, for discovering the one, as our own artificial inventions for discovering the other. But Revelation informs us, that angels, both good and bad, are conversant in this world; which may be true, though we have no distinct, sensible perceptions of their existence and operations. Under former dispensations of religion they might appear, and act in a sensible manner; but under the present dispensation they may, for wise reasons (particularly, because we are now sufficiently instructed in their nature and agency), be wholly invisible: nor may we be capable of distinguishing their secret internal impressions from the suggestions of our own minds; or the external, kind assistances of good angels, or the malicious injuries of evil angels, from the common course of Providence.

II. That we are now upon trial hath been already proved; and that our trial is well and wisely adjusted, cannot be doubted. We ourselves are by no means capable of judging what kind of trials are most suitable to our own spirits, because we know but little of the nature of them. To settle the kind and degree of our Trials, belongs entirely to him who alone understands the nature of our minds, and the designs of his own wisdom. Therefore, if we are shocked when we hear God hath permitted many evil spirits to range our world, and to exercise their malice in tempting mankind, we are really shocked at our own ignorance, seeing this method of trial, as well as the rest, is under regulations of infinite wisdom, and designed for the purposes of infinite goodness.

OBJECTION. "Suppose God hath for wise ends permitted such beings to mingle among mankind, is it not very strange that any should be found so malicious as to employ that permission to the worst of purposes? How can we suppose any spirits, any intelligences, especially of a superior nature, so far abandoned to all sense of goodness and virtue, as to endeavour without ceasing the corruption and perdition of their fellow-creatures?"

ANSWER. That wickedness exists in the universe, is too plain from the state of things in that part of it which we inhabit; where we see great numbers, in spite of their own reason and understanding, and of all the instances of God's love and goodness, and of all the most evident and powerful arguments to virtue and piety, who not only are very vicious themselves, but take an unnatural pleasure in tempting and corrupting others, and making them as bad as themselves. It cannot then be hard to suppose, that there are other spirits, in other circumstances, who, in the same manner, oppose God; that is to say, oppose truth and virtue. For the Devil opposeth and setteth himself against God, not by might and power, as if he were able to contend with the Almighty, but only

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as he oppoſeth virtue and truth; juſt as wicked men do among ourſelves. Indeed, we men are under ſtrong temptations from the fleſh, and the objects that relate to it; but the ſpirits we are ſpeaking of, may be under as ſtrong temptations of ſome other kind, that we are not acquainted with; they may, by ſome ſinful purſuits and compliances, have ſunk themſelves into the laſt degrees of moral pravity, and even be more wicked than the wickedeſt man in the earth, more blind to the goodneſs of God, and more fearleſs of his wrath. Nor are ſuperior natural abilities an abſolute ſecurity againſt the very worſt moral corruption: for we do actually find, that great knowledge and underſtanding are ſo far from always making men good and virtuous, that, on the contrary, theſe are often in a high degree the inſtruments of ſin and diſobedience; being wholly employed in finding out pleas and pretexts for the moſt abandoned iniquity.

Thus you ſee it is very poſſible ſuch vicious ſpirits may be, may be mixed among us, and be permitted to tempt us; and, according to Scripture repreſentations, they are very dangerous enemies. For,

I. Satan is continually going about ſeeking all advantages againſt us, Job i. 7. *The Lord ſaid unto Satan, Whence comeſt thou? Satan anſwered, and ſaid,—— From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it.* And from the query in the next verſe, *Haſt thou conſidered my ſervant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God and eſcheweth evil?* and alſo from what our Saviour ſaith to *Peter*, Luke xxii. 31. *Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath deſired to have you, that he may ſift you as wheat*; it appears, that he is inquiſitive into the characters of men, and buſily ſeeks, and gladly lays hold of any occaſion to try, and, if poſſible, to overthrow their integrity. 1 *Cor.* vii. 5. *Defraud you not one the other, except it be with conſent for a time, that ye may give yourſelves to faſting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency.*

II. We may ſuppoſe a ſpirit of ſuperior faculties to be very ſubtle in underſtanding our various conſtitutions and inclinations, and the particular ſins to which our circumſtances do expoſe us; and in laying his baits, and addreſſing his temptations accordingly.

III. Such a tempter can apply a great variety of machinations, devices, [νοημάτα, 2 *Cor.* ii. 11.] and wiles [μεθοδειας, *Epheſ.* vi. 11,] to deceive. This is ſeen in the caſe of *Eve*. And in tempting our Lord, it is very obſervable, how he varied his devices, and ſhifted the ſcene of temptation, to fix, if poſſible, ſome ſtain upon his ſpotleſs mind. He can put himſelf into any ſhape, either of terror, or pleaſing allurement; either as a roaring lion, or an angel of light, [2 *Cor.* xi. 14]. Sometimes he works by his agents, employing thoſe who are already inſnared to draw in others; ſo *Eve* was his tool to tempt *Adam*: ſometimes injecting into our minds unrighteous, impure ſuggeſtions, [*Luke* xxii. 3. *Acts* v. 3.] ſometimes taking the word out of our heart, [*Luke* viii. 12.] or mixing tares with the good ſeed, [*Mat.* xiii. 25.] and corrupting our minds from the ſimplicity that is in Chriſt.

But then, all this muſt be underſtood under the following reſtrictions.

1. That the Devil can neither hurt us, nor ſo much as attempt to

hurt us, further than God permits. He is not like the pretended evil god of the *Manichees*, eternal, self-existent, almighty, and independent, but as much under the power of God as the weakest reptile under our feet. When God gives him a commission, he cannot act beyond it; and when he has no commission, he is chained up and can do nothing. He is therefore no other than an agent, entirely and always in God's hand, to be used as he sees fit.

2. Nor can he any ways pollute our minds, further than we ourselves do consent. If God permits, possibly he may work upon the humours of the body, he may inflame our passions, abuse our imaginations, or suggest evil things to our thoughts; but unless we willingly admit those impressions, he cannot possibly stain our consciences with sin.

3. God hath not only furnished means and strength to resist him, but hath appointed that, if we do resist him, he shall be conquered and vanquished. *Jam.* iv. 7. *Resist the Devil, and he will*, he shall, he must, *flee from you*; not by his own choice, but by the will and power of God. *The God of* our *peace* and safety *shall bruise Satan under our feet.* And such a victory shall turn to the praise and glory and establishment of our virtue. Hence it follows,

1. That it must be our own act and deed if we are overcome by the temptations of the Devil. It is common for people to consider themselves as altogether *passive* in this case, and to ascribe the wickedness they commit to the power of temptation; whereas, in truth, so far as we are tempted *effectually*, we are *active*, we consent and agree to the temptation, we are drawn away of our own lust and enticed, *Jam.* i. 14. Satan tempts, yet can have no advantage over us but what we choose to give him. And therefore,

2. It must be an aggravation of any crime, that it was done under the power and influence of this wicked spirit. For we must be *the children of disobedience*, we must have abandoned ourselves to wickedness, before Satan can *work in us.* If *Satan* can fill our hearts, consider in what a wretched condition we must be. We must have abused the faculties of our minds; we must have despised all the riches of Divine Goodness; we must have shut our eyes against the light of saving truth, hardened our hearts against the fear of God, seared our consciences, stifled many and strong convictions, done despite to the Spirit of Grace; we must have withdrawn ourselves from God, till he hath forsaken us; we must have advanced from one degree of iniquity to another, till our hearts are prepared to be the seat and residence of the unclean spirit, the murtherer, the father of lies, the prince of darkness. A condition unspeakably deplorable!

With men of virtue and piety he hath no power, though he may vex and assault them, but only with the vicious; and they not only imitate his wickedness, which is bad enough, and constitutes him their *father*, but likewise are under his government, which is still worse, and constitutes him their prince and ruler. Most dreadful case, to be the children of such a father, the subjects of such a prince, the children of perdition, the subjects of the enemy of all righteousness! To have the powers of our minds, designed for the noblest acts and enjoyments, under the dominion of error and lust; to have the spirits created for eternal happiness

in

n union with God, in slavery to the vilest of beings; to have the ouls for whom Christ shed his blood, to deliver them from iniquity, o purify them into the Divine Image, and to prepare them for ever-asting salvation,—to have those souls quite insensible to all that is true nd excellent, heavenly and divine, guided by the grand deceiver, in he power of the destroyer, and by him pushed on in the way of ini-quity to eternal perdition; how frightful is the reflection! how dread-ful must the state of such souls be!

To prevent our falling into such a sad condition, and to secure our-selves from the encroachments of this wicked spirit, let us ever be mind-ful that we have such an enemy, and that, without due care and cir-cumspection, we shall fall under his power. Let us carefully guard our hearts, and observe well the temper and frame of our minds, that we may seasonably restrain every inordinate affection, and immediately re-ject every evil thought and suggestion which starts up in our minds. Be sober, be vigilant. Nothing gives this adversary greater advantage than sensual indulgences. Mortify the flesh with the affections and lusts. Shun all intemperance and excess; and never dare to venture, how little soever, into the way of temptation and sin. And let us be sure to keep close to God in prayer, and other exercises of religion. Thus we shall put ourselves under the banner of the Prince of Life, the Lord Jesus Christ, and shall be kept by the power of God, through faith, unto salvation.

CHAP. XIII.

Of the Consequences of ADAM'S TRANSGRESSION.

Gen. ii. 7, to the End.

WE are now come to a very grand point in Theology, the Fall of Man, or the Consequences of *Adam*'s Transgression upon him-self and his posterity. Which Consequences Divines, both Papist and Protestant, have generally, and for a long tract of time, represented to be those that follow, namely, "the guilt of *Adam*'s first sin imputed "to, or charged upon, all his posterity —— a total defect of that righ-"teousness wherein he is supposed to have been created —— the cor-"ruption of the human nature, whereby all mankind are utterly in-"disposed, disabled, and made opposite unto all that is spiritually good, "and wholly inclined to all evil, and that continually; which cor-"ruption of our nature is the source of all wickedness that is committed "in the world. — Further, by *Adam*'s Transgression all mankind were "deprived of communion with God —— and all, as soon as ever they "come into the world, under his displeasure and curse, being by na-"ture the children of wrath, bond-slaves to Satan, justly liable to all "punishments

" punishments in this world, and in the world to come, to an ever-
" lasting separation from the comfortable presence of God, the most
" grievous torments in soul and body without intermission in hell-fire
" for ever."

This is an affair of the most dreadful importance, and requires to be examined with all possible care and impartiality; for an error in this point will affect the whole scheme of Christianity, pervert and abuse our consciences, and give us very wrong notions of God and of ourselves. Upon this article I have examined the Scriptures, with diligence and impartiality, in the treatise entitled —— *The Scripture Doctrine of Original Sin, proposed to free and candid Examination* —— in the study of which this is a proper place to exercise your thoughts and judgments.

[* Adam having transgressed the law, not only lost a claim to life, but became obnoxious to death, which was *death in law*, or eternal death. And had the law been immediately executed, his posterity, then included in his loins, must have been extinct, or could have had no existence at all; for, the covenant of innocence being broken, there was no covenant or constitution subsisting upon which *Adam* could have the least hope of the continuance of his own life, and consequently, could have no prospect of any posterity. Thus *in Adam all die*. While things were in this state, under broken law, and before a promise of favour, or grace, in this interval, for any thing *Adam* could know, he, and the whole world in him, were utterly lost and undone for ever. But our merciful God and Father had quite different views; he graciously intended to make *Adam*'s sin, and his being exposed to eternal death, an occasion of erecting a new dispensation, a dispensation of grace in the hands of a Mediator. According to which, *Adam* was assured that he should not immediately die, but should live to have a posterity by his wife. So *Adam* understood what the Lord God said, *ver.* 15. And upon this he gave his wife a new name, (*ver.* 20.) חוה *Life*, or *Life-giving*, for joy that mankind were to be propagated from her, when he expected nothing but immediate death in consequence of his transgression.]

[† God graciously intended, after *Adam*'s Transgression, to erect a dispensation of grace, for the redemption of mankind; which grace was declared, and, consequently, which dispensation was established, (*Gen.* iii. 15. *And I will put enmity*, &c.) before the sentence of death was pronounced upon *Adam* (ver. 19. *Dust thou art, and to dust thou shalt return*). Death therefore, in that sentence, stands under the new dispensation, or the dispensation of grace, and for that reason cannot be *Death in* LAW, or eternal death; but *death in* DISPENSATION, or death appointed for wise and good purposes, and to be continued only so long as God should think fit. And thus also *all die in Adam*; thus *by man came death*; thus *by one man sin entered into the world, and death by*, or in consequence

* Take this in, as a note, p. 18 of *Scripture Doctrine of Original Sin*, at the paragraph, 1. *Whereas Adam had before*, &c.

† Take this in, as a note, p. 66 of *Scripture Doctrine of Original Sin*, at *No. Immediately upon the annulling the first covenant*, &c.

uence of, his *sin*. But it was the high and glorious purpose of God, hat his beloved Son, *the seed of the woman*, having, in our flesh, per-rmed the most perfect and complete obedience, should be invested with ominion and power to raise all men from the dead, and to give eternal fe to all them that tread in the steps of his obedience. Thus, *as by man me death, by man came also the resurrection from the dead*; *for, as in Adam ll die, so in Christ shall all be made alive.* 1 Cor. xv. 21, 22. Thus, *as the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation*; *even so, by e righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men unto justification. for as by one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the obedi-nce of one shall the many be made righteous.* Rom. v. 18, 19.]

CHAP. XIV.

Of the Origin of SACRIFICES.

Gen. iv. 1——6.

HERE *Cain* and *Abel* perform an act of religious devotion, by way of Oblation or Sacrifice. The question is, whether this kind of worship was of divine or human institution. They who are of the latter opinion alledge, "that we read of no command from 'God for sacrificing; therefore men did it of their own heads, out of 'a grateful inclination to return unto God some of his own bles-'sings, and to acknowledge him the absolute proprietor of all their 'enjoyments; though they had no directions from him about it." Answer. This seems highly improbable. For how came *Abel* to offer his Sacrifice in *faith* of God's acceptance, (*Heb.* xi. 4.) if his faith had nothing to warrant it but his own imagination? Human imagination, or opinion, never was, or ever can be, either the ground or object of *faith*. It is said, *Gen.* iv. 4. that God had respect to, or shewed his approbation of, both *Abel* and *his offering*; or in the Apostle's words, *he obtained witness, that* himself *was righteous, God testifying of his gifts*, that they were right, and offered in a right manner. On the other hand, he censured *Cain* as having presented his Oblation in such a manner as was not pleasing to God; which evidently supposes a previous insti-tution, and a rule which *Cain* was, or might have been, acquainted with. For, had there not been such a rule given, how could he have been blamed for not observing it? It is absurd to say, he transgressed a rule of his own imagination and invention.

The institution not being mentioned in a history so concise, argues nothing. Other things are also omitted, as religious assemblies, *Enoch*'s prophecy, *Noah*'s preaching, the peopling of the world, or the increase of *Adam*'s family. Things well known, or generally supposed, when the

the hiſtorian wrote, needed not to be mentioned, but might be taken fo granted. The only proper and concluſive argument would be to prove " that in thoſe early days they had no communication with, or revela " tion from God; and therefore, having no way of knowing what th " mind of the Lord was, were under a neceſſity of inventing ſomethin " of their own." But this is far from being the caſe. God, in ſom viſible form, frequently appeared, and made his mind known to *Adam* and to all the ſucceeding Patriarchs mentioned in the book of *Geneſis* for the ſpace of 2315 years; yea, he converſed and reaſoned with an inſtructed *Cain* himſelf. When therefore *Adam*, and all the other Pa triarchs, had the fulleſt opportunity of knowing from God himſelf what kind of worſhip was moſt acceptable to him, there was no nee of their own invention; and it is abſurd to ſuppoſe that they followe no other guide.

In the infancy of the church they wanted direction, and withou doubt were directed in every thing relating to religion eſpecially, ſo fa as was agreeable to that diſpenſation. Doubtleſs *Adam* was inſtructe by God to ſacrifice; and it is not improbable that thoſe beaſts, wit the ſkins of which *Adam* and *Eve* were clothed, *Gen.* iii. 21. were ſlai as Sacrifices. God certainly inſtructed our firſt parents in the faith an worſhip which the alteration in their circumſtances required. Having made a moſt gracious covenant with them, (*ver.* 15) it is not unreaſon able to ſuppoſe, that he alſo ſignified to them, that they ſhould, for a perpetual ratification and aſſurance of it to their faith, offer to him Sa crifices; for by the blood of Sacrifices covenants were ratified in after times. The eating of the tree of life, was a covenanting action, (aſ ſuring immortality to their continued obedience) ſuitable to a ſtate o innocence. But the mactation of a living creature, (expreſſing the deadly nature of ſin, at the ſame time that it aſſured them of eternal life through a ſacrificed Redeemer) was more ſuitable to a ſtate o guilt.

Ver. 3. *Cain brought* מִפְּרִי *of the fruit of the ground*, &c. ver. 4. *And Abel alſo brought of the firſtlings of the flock*, &c. " As there were ſome " ſolemn times of making their devout acknowledgments to God; ſo, " I doubt not, there was ſome ſet place, where they aſſembled for that " purpoſe. For the Hebrew word for *brought*, is never uſed in rela " tion to domeſtic, or private Sacrifices; but always in relation to " thoſe public Sacrifices which were brought to the door of the taber " nacle of the congregation. As *Lev.* iv. 4. *He ſhall bring* וְהֵבִיא " *the bullock* to the door, &c. Which occurs all along, eſpecially in " the ninth chapter of that book.

" And therefore, I ſuppoſe, they brought theſe Sacrifices, here men " tioned, to ſome fixed [public] place, where the *Shechinah*, or glorious " preſence of God appeared. For, as they muſt have ſome ſettled place, " where they [publicly] performed ſacred offices, it is moſt reaſonable " to think it had, in thoſe early days, reſpect to the *Shechinah*, or Di " vine preſence, as well as afterwards under the Moſaic diſpenſation, " [when the Divine Preſence reſided] in the tabernacle and temple. " And therefore they are ſaid to *appear before God*, [Exod. xxiii. 17. " xxxiv. 24.

xxxiv. 24. Pſal. xlii. 2, *&c.* or to *preſent themſelves before the Lord*, Job. i. 6." *]

That ſome viſible token of the preſence of God appeared in their ligious aſſemblies in thoſe earlieſt days of the church, and ſpake and onverſed with them, as occaſion required, is evident enough. So the ord God appeared frequently and familiarly to *Adam*. He held a conrence with *Cain* in ſuch a manner as plainly ſhews it was no extraornary thing. And *when the ſons*, or children, *of God came together to reſent themſelves before the Lord*, the Lord is repreſented as diſcourſing ith *Satan* about the character and circumſtances of *Job*. Job i. 6—12. . 1—7.

While men were not ſo numerous, but that they might all aſſemble ogether at one place, probably the *Shechinah* ſtatedly appeared among em every ſabbath. But when they were ſo numerous, that they could ot ordinarily meet together once a week, and therefore were under a eceſſity of performing their worſhip in ſeparate and remote places; yet e *Shechinah*, or token of the Divine Preſence, might ſtill remain and ppear as uſual in that original place, where *Adam* and his immediate deendents had firſt attended upon divine ſervice, and where the Patriarchs, a right line deſcended from *Adam*, had their place of reſidence. There, robably, *Noah* builded his altar, and there the Lord converſed with im. *Gen.* viii. 20, *&c.* ix. 1——18. There *Rebekah* went to *inquire the Lord*, Gen. xxv. 22, 23; and ſhe received an anſwer, probably, om the *Shechinah* or Divine Preſence.

From all this it ſeems not unlikely, that *Cain* and *Abel*'s Offerings ere performed before the whole aſſembly of *Adam*'s family (which en muſt have been conſiderably increaſed), and that the divine acceptnce of the one, and rejection of the other, was ſignified by ſome viible mark, which appeared and was obſerved by the whole congreation. It would add very much to *Cain*'s diſguſt to find himſelf ſo penly diſparaged, and ſunk ſo much in the favour of God, and the teem of the whole family, below his younger brother; over whom, n that ſole account, as he was the firſt-born, he claimed pre-eminence, nd expected, whatever his character was, pious or impious, to have een preferred before him.

The mark by which the Lord God teſtified his acceptance of *Abel* nd his Sacrifice, was, probably, a ſtream of fire iſſuing from the *She-inah*, which conſumed his Sacrifice. So *Gen.* xv. 17. *A ſmoking furace and burning lamp*, i. e. the Shechinah, *paſſed between the pieces* of the acrifice, and conſumed them, in confirmation of the covenant. And e have many other examples of this kind in ſacred Hiſtory; as when *Moſes* offered the firſt great burnt-offering, *Lev.* ix. 24; when *Gideon* offered upon the rock, *Judg.* vi. 21; when *David* ſtayed the lague, 1 *Chron.* xxi. 26; and *Solomon* conſecrated the temple, *Chron.* vii. 13; and when *Elijah* contended with the *Baalites*, 1 *Kings* viii. 38, *&c.* whence the *Iſraelites*, *Pſal.* xx. 3. wiſhing all proſperity o their king, pray that God *would accept* [דשנה *turn into aſhes*] *his urnt-offering.*

Ver. 6, 7.

* Biſhop *Patrick*'s Comment. in loco.

Ver. 6, 7. The Lord God reproved *Cain* for the diſguſt and indign tion he had conceived againſt his brother, inſtructing him in terms divine acceptance. *If thou doſt well, ſhalt thou not be accepted?* Mo certainly —— For I have an impartial regard to true piety, whereſoev I find it. *But if thou doſt not well, ſin* (i. e. the puniſhment of ſin, *ver.* 13, and *chap.* xix. 15, and ſeveral other places,) *lieth* couching *the door*, ready to fall upon thee; *and unto thee ſhall be his deſire, and th ſhalt rule over him.* Three things are here ſuggeſted to appeaſe his r reſentment. 1. That the reaſon of his not being reſpected was not in h brother, but in himſelf; for, if he had done well, he would have been much reſpected. 2. That, if he did ill, he had no reaſon to expect th Divine favour, but the reverſe. 3. That this ſhould not alter his civ right, nor give *Abel* any authority over him, but he ſhould ſtill retai the privilege of his birth-right. Note —— This ſhews, that the pr vileges of his birth-right had been previouſly ſettled, either by divi appointment, or approbation.

But the rancour of *Cain*'s mind could not thus be cured. Being *the Wicked One*, the murtherer, who had lately attempted to deſtroy a mankind, he took an opportunity, and ſlew his brother. Poſſibly th next ſabbath, *Abel*'s place being empty in the aſſembly of *Adam*'s family the Lord addreſſed himſelf to *Cain*, charged him with his crime, and, i puniſhment of it, baniſhed him from the country where *Adam* and h family reſided; by rendering the ground barren to him, inſomuch tha notwithſtanding all his endeavours, it ſhould not yield him any increaſ This would neceſſarily oblige him to go ſeek a ſubſiſtence in ſome othe place. To this ſentence *Cain* remonſtrates as too ſevere, [and by th bye, his familiar, indeed too familiar, manner of anſwering the *Shechi nah*, ſhews, that ſuch appearances of the Divine Preſence were commo and cuſtomary] apprehending he ſhould thereby *be hid from the face the Lord*, (ver. 14.) or deprived of his care and inſpection, and confi dered by all mankind as a ſtrolling brute, expoſed to their hatred, an in continual danger of being deſtroyed. But God, who for wiſe an holy ends often protects and prolongs the lives even of very wicke men, intended that *Cain* ſhould live; either that he might have ſpac to repent, or, being impenitent, might remain a monument of Divi Juſtice; and therefore, before the whole aſſembly, threatened a worſ puniſhment than *Cain*'s to the man who ſhould, by killing him, de feat the divine ſentence, or fruſtrate his grace.

And the Lord ſet a mark אות *upon Cain*, &c. In the Hebrew it i *And the Lord ſet*, or exhibited, *a true token to Cain, that no one who m him, ſhould kill him*; i. e. gave him ſome pledge or aſſurance, declare either in words, as by an oath, or by ſome outward token, that his lif ſhould be preſerved. So the ſpies gave *Rahab a token*, אות אמת, tha her life, and the lives of all her relations, ſhould be preſerved. *Joſhua* i 12—14. This token to *Rahab* ſeems to have been a ſolemn oath; fo the *ſcarlet cord* was not a token to *Rahab*, but to the ſpies, to diſtin guiſh her houſe. *N. B.* I do not find in Scripture, that אות ever ſig nifies a mark, or brand, impreſſed upon a man's body, but always ſom external aſſurance, or pledge given by God. *Gen.* ix. 13. xvii. 1

1 *Sam*

Sam. ii. 34. xiv. 10. 2 *King.* xix. 28. *Isai.* xxxviii. 7, 8. *Jer.* xliv. 9, *&c. &c.*

Ver. 16. And *Cain*, by force of the divine curse, *went out from the presence of the Lord*, i. e. out of the assembly where the Lord appeared, and was worshipped, and never enjoyed the blessings and advantages which attended the assembly any more.

CHAP. XV.

Of the SHECHINAH, *and Divine* APPEARANCES.

HAVING had occasion, in the foregoing chapter, to mention the *Shechinah*, (a rabbinical word from שכן *to dwell*,) which is used to signify a glorious Appearance, covered, or attended with a cloud, denoting the extraordinary presence of God, who is necessarily every where present; this may be a proper place to examine the Scripture upon the point of Divine Appearances. They are mentioned in both parts of the holy Scripture; sometimes without taking any notice of a visible glory, and often expressly mentioning it; as in the following places. *Gen.* xv. 17. *The smoking furnace and lamp of fire*, ולפיד אש, are justly supposed to correspond to the *cloud and pillar of fire*, afterwards mentioned, as representing the Divine Presence. Probably, in the visible glory the Lord appeared to *Abraham*, Gen. xvii. 1; and to *Isaac*, *chap.* xxvi. 2; and certainly to *Moses* in the bush, *Exod.* iii. 2. The *Shechinah* was also in the cloud and pillar of fire, *Exod.* xiii. 21. for it was the same cloud that afterward rested upon the tabernacle, when it was set up, and is called *the Cloud of the Lord*. Exod. xl. 38. Numb. x. 34. For *the glory of the Lord* was within the tabernacle upon the mercy-seat, as the cloud was on the outside of it. *Exod.* xl. 34. 35. and it is there described, as in *Exod.* xiii. 21. that it appeared as a cloud upon the tabernacle by day, and as a fire by night. *Exod.* xl. 38. *Numb.* ix. 15, 16.

Thus it conducted and guarded them in their journeys, [and then one was ordinarily seen by the whole congregation] *Exod.* xl. 36. *Numb.* ix. 17, 18, *&c.* [*Isaiah* alludes to this *chap.* iv. 5, 6.] And, as this was the token of the Divine Presence went before them, *the Lord* is said *to go before them*, and *to lead them* by this cloud. And out of this cloud, or rather from the glory of the Lord, within the tabernacle, the Lord spake unto *Moses* what he spake and delivered in the books of *Exodus*, *Leviticus*, and *Numbers*. Numb. vii. 89. *And when Moses went into the tabernacle of the congregation, to speak with him* [God], *then he heard the voice of one speaking unto him from off the mercy-seat, that was upon the ark of the testimony, between the two Cherubims, and he spake unto him*; agreeably

ably to what God had said, *Exod.* xxv. 22. *I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy-seat, from between the two Cherubims which are upon the ark of the testimony, of all things which I will give thee in commandment unto the children of Israel.* And there, as upon a throne, between the Cherubims, the *glory of the Lord* had its residence in the *holy place* in *Solomon*'s temple, after it had taken possession of the house, at the consecration of it. 1 *King.* viii. 10, 11. [and there it continued till the Babylonish captivity.] Hence God is said *to dwell between the Cherubims.* 1 Sam. iv. 4. 2 Sam. vi. 2. 2 King. xix. 15. Psalm. lxxx. 1, *&c.* The *glory of the Lord* appeared to *Isaiah* in the temple. *Isai.* vi. 1. and to *Ezekiel*, with many awful circumstances. *Ezek.* i. 28. iii. 23. x. 4. xi. 23. xliii. 2, 4, 5. xliv. 4. *The glory of the Lord shone round about the shepherds, and the angel of the Lord came upon them,* Luke ii. 8, 9. and to the three Disciples at the transfiguration, *Mat.* xvii. 5. *While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and behold, a voice out of the cloud, which said, this is my beloved Son,* &c. The *Shechinah* appeared to *Saul,* Acts ix. 3. *Suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven*; and to *Peter* in the prison. *Acts* xii. 7.

These are the most remarkable Divine Appearances mentioned in Scripture. Now the question is, Who, in such instances, was the person that appeared and spake? For example, *Exod.* iii. 14, it is written, *And God said unto Moses,* I AM THAT I AM: *and he said, thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel,* I AM *hath sent me unto you.* Who was it that spake to *Moses?* Or what notion are we to form of that being who pronounced those words, I AM THAT I AM? What makes the inquiry necessary is this, that in the second verse it is said, *The* ANGEL OF THE LORD *appeared in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush.* And yet it is said, concerning the same person, *ver.* 4. *When* THE LORD *saw that he turned aside to see,* GOD *called to him out of the midst of the bush.* ver. 6. *Moreover he said, I am the* GOD *of thy father, the* GOD *of Abraham, the* GOD *of Isaac,* &c. And, *ver.* 14. GOD *said unto Moses,* I AM THAT I AM. *ver.* 15. GOD *said unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, the* LORD GOD *of your fathers hath sent me unto you.* Now, most certain it is, that it was the ANGEL of the LORD that appeared to *Moses*; and certain it is, that the *Angel of the Lord,* that appeared to *Moses* in the bush, did, out of the bush, pronounce the several sentences I have quoted. It was the *Angel of the Lord* who said, *I am the* GOD *of thy father:* I AM THAT I AM. But *the Angel of the Lord God* is not the *Lord God,* whose Angel he is. How then can it be said, that the *Lord God* appeared and spake to *Moses?* This is the difficulty; and the solution is ready, and very clear.

The solid and incontestable foundation of the solution is laid by our Lord himself, who perfectly understood the whole affair of Divine Appearances, in *John* v. 37. *And the Father himself, who hath sent me, hath born witness of me. Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape.* John i. 18. *No man hath seen God at any time.* He is *the invisible God, whom no man hath seen, or can see.* It is often said, that the Lord, the most high God, *appeared* to the Patriarchs, to *Moses,* and to the Prophets, the ancestors of the *Jews*; but, according to our Lord's rule, the Appearance, form, or shape, which they saw, was not the

Appearance

Appearance of the Lord God himself, for never, at any time, did they see his shape. Again, it is often said, that the most High God *spake* to the Patriarchs, to *Moses*, and the Prophets; but our Lord affirms, that they never heard his voice at any time. How shall we reconcile this seeming inconsistency?

The true solution, according to the Scriptures, is this: That the Lord God never spake or appeared in person, but always by a proxy, *nuncius*, or messenger, who represented him, and therefore spake in his name and authority, saying, *I am God all-sufficient*; *I am the God of Abraham*; I AM THAT I AM. Which words were pronounced by an Angel; but are true, not of the Angel, but of God, whom he represented, and upon whose errand he came. So a herald reads a proclamation in the king's name and words, as if the king himself were speaking. Or, to use a more common instance, so a brief is published in the king's name and language, as if the king himself were addressing the congregation where it is read. Thus, GEORGE *by the grace of God*, &c. *whereas it hath been represented to* US, &c. *therefore they have humbly besought* US *to grant unto them* OUR *Letters Patent*, &c. *unto which their request* WE *have graciously condescended*, &c. But much, surely, would he be mistaken, who should imagine, that the person who reads the proclamation, or the brief, was his Majesty KING GEORGE, because he useth his words, and speaks as if the king himself were speaking.

That this is a true representation of the case, will appear,

I. From the signification of the word ANGEL, [αγγελος מלאך] which is a Greek word, and both in that language, and in the Hebrew, signifies a *messenger*, or nuncius, an *ambassador*; one who acts and speaks, not in his own name, or behalf, but in the name, person, and behalf of him that sends him. And thus the word is frequently rendered in our translation. And had it always been rendered the *messenger of the Lord*, instead of *the Angel of the Lord*, the case would have been very plain. But *Angel*, being a Greek word, which the English reader doth not understand, it throws some obscurity upon such passages.

II. It is in Scripture expressly said, that it was an *Angel*, a *nuncius*, or messenger of the Lord, who spake, even when the Lord himself is said, or supposed to speak. As *Gen.* xvi. 7. *The Angel* מלאך found Hagar; and, *ver.* 10, *said unto her, I will multiply thy seed exceedingly.* Gen. xviii. 1. *The Lord appeared unto Abraham*, ver. 2. *And he lifted up his eyes, and lo, three men*, three Angels in the shape of men, *stood by him.* Now one of those men, or Angels, was a *nuncius* sent particularly to *Abraham*; for, *ver.* 10, *he said*, as he was sitting at meat, *I will certainly return unto thee*; *and lo, Sarah shall have a son.* *And* Sarah heard it, *ver.* 12, and laughed. *Ver.* 13. *And the Lord*, i. e. the Angel who spake in the Lord, *said, Wherefore did Sarah laugh?* Ver. 14. *Is any thing too hard for the Lord? At the appointed time I will return unto thee, and Sarah shall have a son.* Again, *Gen.* xxii. 15. *And the Angel*, or messenger, *of the Lord called unto Abraham out of heaven*, ver. 16, *and said, by myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, that in blessing I will bless thee*, &c. Upon which place St. AUSTIN, quoted by Bp. PATRICK in his Commentary upon the place, argues in this manner.

" In the beginning of this chapter, *ver.* 1, 2, we read, that God " *tempted* [tried] *Abraham*, and bad him go, and offer up his ſon *Iſaac*; " but, *ver.* 11, 12. *The Angel of the Lord called unto him out of heaven,* " *and ſaid, Lay not thy hands upon the lad.* What is the meaning of this? " Will they ſay, that *God* commanded *Iſaac* to be ſlain, and that his " *Angel* forbad it? and that *Abraham* obeyed the Angel who bid him " ſpare his ſon, againſt God, who ordered him to ſlay him? This is " ridiculous, and not to be endured. The plain meaning is, that God " ſpake both times, in the one caſe, and the other; but he ſpake by " an Angel, who was his miniſter. That is the reaſon Angels ſome- " times ſpeak as if they were the Lord, becauſe they ſpake in the Lord's " name. Juſt as when a public crier in a court pronounces the ſen- " tence of the judge, it is not entered in the public records, that the " crier pronounced that ſentence, but the judge, in whoſe name and " authority the crier pronounced it." Thus St. Austin. — In *Exod.* iii. 2. the Angel, *nuncius*, or meſſenger of the Lord, appeared unto *Moſes*; and ſaid, *I am the God of Abraham*; I AM THAT I AM; ſpeaking not of himſelf, but of the Lord whoſe meſſenger he was.—*Joſhua* vi. 2. *The Lord ſaid unto Joſhua.* It appears from *chap.* v. 13, 14. that it was not the Lord who ſpake, but an Angel, under the title of *the Captain of the Lord's Hoſt.*

Further, it is evident from every part of the law of *Moſes*, that it was given and ordained by God, the Lord, the moſt high God; and in his name it is every where worded and enjoined, *Exod.* xx. 1, 2. *And God ſpake all theſe words, ſaying, I am the Lord thy God. And the Lord ſaid unto Moſes. And Moſes ſaid unto the Lord.* And yet it appears from repeated teſtimonies in the New Teſtament, that it was not the Lord, who immediately himſelf ſpake, either to *Moſes*, or to all the people. Thus *Stephen, a man full of faith, and of the Holy Ghoſt.* Acts vii. 35. *This Moſes, whom they refuſed,——did God ſend to be a ruler, and a deliverer by the hands of the Angel*, or meſſenger, *who appeared to him in the buſh*; and who is called *the Angel of his*, God's, *preſence.* Iſai. lxiii. 9. ver. 28. *This* [Moſes] *is he that was in the church in the wilderneſs, with the Angel who ſpake to him in Mount Sinai.* [Note——it was an Angel, meſſenger, that ſpake to *Moſes* in Mount *Sinai.*] ver. 53.——*who have received the law by the diſpoſition*, in the Conſtitutions publiſhed by the miniſtry, *of Angels.* Gal. iii. 19. *Wherefore then ſerveth the law of Moſes? It was added, becauſe of tranſgreſſions, till the ſeed ſhould come, to whom the promiſe was made*; *and it*, the law, *was ordained by* the miniſtry of *Angels.* Heb. ii. 2. *For if the word ſpoken by Angels was ſteadfaſt*, meaning the law given by *Moſes.* That law was ſpoken to him, and to all the people, by angels, who ſpake, not of themſelves, but what was communicated to them from God.

III. The *Jews* very well underſtood the nature of thoſe manifeſtations. They knew when a miraculous voice came to them, ſpeaking as God himſelf would ſpeak, that it was a meſſenger from God, who ſpake in his name and ſtead, *Gen.* xvi. 7, 9. The Angel of the Lord appeared and ſpake to *Hagar*; yet ſhe knew it was a Divine Appearance, and that the Angel perſonated the moſt High God. Therefore, *ver.* 13. *ſhe called the name of the* Lord, *that ſpake unto her, thou* God *ſeeſt me.*——

Gen. xxxii. 24,

Gen. xxxii. 24. *There wreſtled a man with Jacob.* Now *Jacob* knew that man was a meſſenger from God; and therefore, *ver.* 30. *he called the name of the place Peniel; for I have ſeen God face to face*, i. e. I have ſeen an evident manifeſtation from God. —— The common token, that ſuch were Divine Manifeſtations, was the glory which attended the meſſenger, who pronounced the words of the meſſage. And whenever that glory appeared, the *Jews* knew the meſſage came from God, whoever it was that brought it. Thus *Luke* ii. 9. *The Angel of the Lord came upon* the ſhepherds, *and the glory of the Lord ſhone round about them.* They knew the glory they ſaw was not the glory of the Angel, but a token of the Divine Preſence and authority, ſignifying that the meſſage came from the Lord. Therefore they ſay, *ver.* 15, *Let us now go —— and ſee this thing, which the* LORD *hath made known unto us.* And ſo *Saul* knew the light ſhining from heaven, was the glory of the Lord, and an infallible proof of a Divine Manifeſtation. And, 2 *Pet.* i. 17. *He*, our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, *received from* God the Father, *honour and glory, when there came ſuch a voice unto him from the excellent Glory, This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleaſed.* Whoever the meſſenger was that uttered theſe words, the Diſciples, that ſaw the transfiguration on the mount, knew that the thing came from God the Father; becauſe *the voice*, or words, *came from the excellent Glory*, or the *Shechinah*.

It is very remarkable, that when our Lord was exalted to univerſal dominion, at the right-hand of God, as head of the church, he alſo had his ANGEL, *Nuncius*, or meſſenger, whom he diſpatched upon the affairs of his government. *Rev.* i. 1. *The revelation of Jeſus Chriſt, which* GOD *gave unto him, to ſhew unto his ſervants things which muſt ſhortly come to paſs; and he*, Jeſus, *ſent and ſignified it by his* ANGEL *unto his ſervant John.* And therefore, though the glorious appearance, *Rev.* i. 13—17. is rightly underſtood of our Lord, yet it was not he in perſon, but his ANGEL, Nuncius, or meſſenger, who repreſented him, and appeared and ſpake in his name. And ſo in other places of the *Revelation*; where, nevertheleſs, our Lord may juſtly be ſuppoſed to appear and ſpeak.

We may here obſerve, that it hath been commonly ſuppoſed, that our Lord, before his incarnation, was the ANGEL that appeared in the *Shechinah*, and ſpake to *Adam* and the Patriarchs, to *Moſes* and the prophets, and is called *the Angel of his preſence*, Iſai. lxiii. 9. *In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the Angel of his preſence ſaved them; in his love and in his pity he redeemed them, and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old.* To this purpoſe they underſtand, *John* xii. 41. *Theſe things ſaid Eſaias, when he ſaw his glory and ſpake of him*, i. e. "ſaw, at that time, "the glory of *Chriſt*, who was then the medium of divine manifeſtations, "*and ſpake of him*, and of his times, or what would happen with reſpect "to the reception of the Goſpel, when he ſhould preach it to the Jews." [Dr. *Doddridge.*] But, *when he ſaw his glory*, may be well interpreted, "when he [Eſaias] foreſaw his glory, or the glorious manifeſtations, "which God intended to make of himſelf to the Jews by his Son." [Dr. *Clarke.*] So *John* viii. 56. *Abraham ſaw*, foreſaw, *my day, and was glad.* Thus alſo, as he tabernacled among the Jews in the cloud of glory, they judge *he was in the form of God*, Phil. ii. 9; which form, or

likeneſs he was not greedy of retaining, *but emptied himſelf of it, and too upon him the form of a ſervant.* But this form, or likeneſs of God, ma refer to *the glory which he had with the father before the world was,* Joh xvii. 5. With regard to which he may alſo be ſaid to be *the image o God,* 2 Cor. iv. 4. — *the image of the inviſible God,* Col. i. 15. — *th brightneſs of his glory, and the expreſs image of his perſon,* Heb. i. 3. How ever, I ſhould willingly admit that ſuch expreſſions refer to the gloriou appearances of the *Shechinah* under the Old Teſtament, were it not fo this objection, that our Lord muſt then be ſuppoſed to publiſh the Law and to preſide over the Jewiſh diſpenſation, as well as over the Goſpel which ſeems to be quite inconſiſtent with *John* i. 17. *The law was give by Moſes, but grace and truth came by Jeſus Chriſt.* See alſo *Heb.* i. 1, 2 ii. 2. [Here the Apoſtle's argument proceeds wholly upon the difference of the perſons, the *Angels*, who publiſhed the law, and the *Lord Jeſu Chriſt*, who publiſhed the Goſpel; but his argument hath no ſtrength a all, if thoſe perſons are the ſame *. See Mr. *Pierce* upon the text.] *Heb*

* But may we not diſtinguiſh between the λογος as a Proxy of Deity, or a perſonating the glorious Majeſty of God in the *Shechinah*, and in that capacity, by the Holy Spirit, inſpiring the Prophets, and preſiding over the Angels at the giving of the law; and the ſame λογος acting and ſpeaking to us in his incarnate ſtate, in the capacity of a Prophet? In the former capacity he may be conſidered in relation to God, as perſonating God, or as in the form of God, whoſe agent he was under *every* diſpenſation which God erected; and therefore as doing nothing in his own perſon. For thus, his perſon would coincide with that of the ſupreme God, and is not to be conſidered as different from him, but as acting in his name and authority. In the latter capacity he may be conſidered in relation to *us*, and to our ſalvation by the Goſpel; for the accompliſhment of which, he ſtooped ſo far as to take upon him our nature, and, not as perſonating God, but in quality of a Prophet ſent from God, to publiſh among us in his own perſon and name, the promiſe of eternal life.

And muſt not this bring us under greater obligations to attend to him; and be ſufficient to diſtinguiſh him as acting in delivering the law, and preaching the Goſpel? He that was in the form of God, and repreſented God, when the law was delivered, and who delivered it by the miniſtry of Angels and of *Moſes*; that tranſcendently glorious perſon afterwards became a man, and in his *own* perſon, and by his *own* miniſtry, delivered to us the Goſpel. Doth not this, in a very peculiar manner, recommend to us the Goſpel, and oblige us to attend to its doctrines? *Heb.* i. 1, 2. *God who at ſundry times, and in divers manners, ſpake in time paſt unto the fathers* BY THE PROPHETS, *hath in theſe laſt days ſpoken unto us* BY HIS SON, *&c.* God always ſpake by Proxy. And the Apoſtle might ſpeak as he doth, although it be true that our Lord was the Proxy of Deity under the Old Teſtament diſpenſation; for the Apoſtle here conſiders, not who was the Proxy of Deity, but by whom he immediately ſpake to the fathers in the Jewiſh church, and to us in the Chriſtian church. And the oppoſition lieth between, not the Proxies or Repreſentatives of Deity, but between THE PROPHETS in the former diſpenſation, and THE SON OF GOD in the latter. By his Son, as his Proxy, he ſpake to the Prophets, and by the Prophets he ſpake to the Old Teſtament fathers. But under the New Teſtament his well beloved Son, who before was indeed in the form of God, as his Proxy, himſelf became a Prophet, and in the form of a man ſpake to us immediately as a Prophet.

Heb. iii. 1—3. [Here *Moſes*'s houſe, and *Chriſt*'s houſe, or diſpenſation, are clearly diſtinguiſhed.]

But ſuppoſing our Lord was the Angel, who appeared and ſpake under the Old Teſtament, yet it muſt be remembered, that he appeared and ſpake only as an *Angel*, or *Nuncius*, from God. Which character he expreſsly ſuſtains, *Mal.* iii. 1. — *and* האדון *the Lord, whom ye ſeek, ſhall ſuddenly come to his temple*; *even* מלאך הברית *the meſſenger*, Angel, *of the covenant*, [not the Sinai, but the Goſpel covenant,] *whom ye delight in.*

CHAP. XVI.

Of the GLORY OF THE LORD, *as it hath relation to the* SHECHINAH, *or Divine* APPEARANCES.

[IT is deſerving of our further obſervation, that the *Shechinah*, or divine appearances, as a token of God's preſence, and of his guidance, encouragement, and protection of his people, is often mentioned in the Old Teſtament under the character of THE GLORY OF JEHOVAH. As in *Exodus* xvi. 7, 10. xxiv. 16. *Lev.* ix. 6, 23. *Num.* xiv. 10, 21, 22. xvi. 19. xx. 6. *Hebrews* ix. 5. — *the Cherubim of the Glory*, i. e. the glory of Jehovah, dwelling between the Cherubim, over the Mercy-ſeat. St. *Peter* alludes to this, 2 Epiſt. i. 17. — *there came a Voice from the excellent Glory.* This token of God's preſence is otherwiſe called his *Preſence*, Exodus xxxiii. 14. and his *Name*, as that ſignifieth a mark of diſtinction or eminence. *Deut.* xii. 5. 2 *Chron.* vii. 16.

Certainly it was the peculiar honour and advantage of the *Iſraelites*, that they had ſuch a public viſible manifeſtation of the preſence and favour of God; [Rom. ix. 4 *Who are Iſraelites*; *to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the Glory*, or the glorious manifeſtations of God.] And was well adapted to that diſpenſation of the church; eſpecially in the early times of its inſtitution under *Moſes*, when they could not, by abſtract reaſoning, be ſo well acquainted with the nature and perfections of God; and therefore ſtood in need of ſome extraordinary viſible token, to ſtrike and affect their minds with a ſenſe of his preſence, power, authority, favour, and protection.

And as *the glory of the Lord* appeared publicly in favour of the *Iſraelites*, to guard and guide them, when they left the land of *Egypt*; ſo *the glory of the Lord* is uſed figuratively to denote, in general, his ſpecial bleſſing, favour, preſence, and protection, upon any occaſion. *Iſaiah* lviii. 8. *Is not to deal thy bread to the hungry*, &c. *Then ſhall thy light*, proſperity, *break forth as the morning, and thy health ſhall ſpring forth ſpeedily: and thy righteouſneſs* [ſalvation, Saviour] *ſhall go before thee*, THE GLORY

OF JEHOVAH *shall be thy rereward*, shall advance in thy rear, or behind thee, to guard thee; alluding to the *Shechinah*, as it guarded and guided the children of *Israel*. *Isaiah* lx. 1. *Arise, shine; for thy light*, happiness, *is come, and* THE GLORY OF JEHOVAH *is risen upon thee*. Thus it is figuratively to denote the divine favour and guardianship.

And in the same manner it is applied to the Christian church, as denoting all the light and blessings, grace, and glory of the Gospel. *Num.* xiv. 21. *But as truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with* MY GLORY; speaking of the Gospel, in contradiction to the Jewish peculiarity. *Isa.* xxxv. 1, 2. *The wilderness of the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose*, &c. *They shall see* THE GLORY OF JEHOVAH, *and the excellency of our God.* Ibid. xl. 3, 4, 5. *The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord; make straight in the desert a high way for our God. Every valley shall be exalted*, &c. *And* THE GLORY OF JEHOVAH *shall be revealed, and all flesh* shall see it together, [כל completely, or in its perfection] *for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it*. Hab. ii. 14. *For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the* GLORY OF GOD, *as the waters cover the sea*.

All these passages are to be understood of the Gospel manifestations of God's grace, which is his glory. *Exodus* xxxiii. 18, 19. *And Moses said, I beseech thee, shew me thy* Glory. *And he said, I will make all my* Goodness *pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of Jehovah before thee*; namely, as in Chap. xxxiv. 6, 7. *The Lord—proclaimed, The Lord, The Lord God merciful, and gracious*, &c. The goodness and mercy of the Lord is *the glory of the Lord*.

And observe, how the Apostle, 2 *Cor.* iii. 13—18. alludes to the glory of the *Shechinah*, with which *Moses* conversed in the mount; and which impressed such a splendour upon his countenance, as obliged him to cover it with a veil, when he returned to the people; who otherwise could not bear to look upon the excessive brightness of the glory of God, reflected from his, *Moses*'s, face. In allusion to this veil, obscuring the brightness of *Moses* his countenance, the Apostle informs us, ver. 14, 15, that there was an obscurity, a veil over his writings; which veil, after *Christ* was come, and had taken it away from the Old Testament, the *Jews*, through unbelief, transferred to their own hearts, and so remained ignorant of the true meaning of *Moses* and the prophets. *But*, ver. 18. *we all* [all we Christians, in opposition to the blinded *Jews*, ver. 13, 14.] *we all with open*, unveiled, face, having *the* GLORY *of the* LORD *reflected upon us* [from the face of Jesus, Chap. iv. 6.] *as from a mirror, are*, in the dispositions of our minds, *changed into the same image* of moral excellency, *from glory to glory*, or in order to the most complete glory, *even as by the Spirit of the Lord*. John i. 14. *The word was made flesh, and* ἐσκήνωσεν *dwelt*, tabernacled, *among us; and we*, as well as his first disciples, *beheld the glory of Jesus Christ, as of the only begotten Son of God, full of grace and truth*. The Son of God became a man subject to like frailties with us, and lived and conversed freely amongst men; teaching them fully and plainly the great truths relating to God's gracious purposes concerning the redemption and eternal salvation of mankind. And thus God, and his merciful regards to men, his presence in his church, and his power, engaged to keep his servants, and to bring them

them to the poſſeſſion of eternal life, is more clearly and illuſtriouſly manifeſted in the Goſpel, than his favourable preſence and protection were by the *Shechinah* in the temple, or in any other place, among the *Iſraelites*.

We who, under the Goſpel diſpenſation, are ſo well acquainted with the nature and perfections of God, do not ſtand in need of any extraordinary viſible token of the divine preſence. The glorious truths of the Goſpel, revealed by *Jeſus Chriſt*, are our *Shechinah*, ſhining from him upon our minds, and filling them with comfort and joy, in the aſſured hope of his preſent care and bleſſing, and of the poſſeſſion of glory, honour, and immortality in the future world. And this is to us as a *Shechinah*, infinitely preferable to the viſible appearances in the church of old.

CHAP. XVII.

The SCRIPTURE-CHRONOLOGY *from the* CREATION *to the* DELUGE.

Gen. 5th Chapter.

WE are now got as far as the Deluge. And here, according to *Moſes*, who here begins his genealogies, is the proper place for conſidering how far we are advanced in the age, or chronology, of the world. For in this chapter he gives the names and ages of the Patriarchs from *Adam* to *Noah*, together with the age of every father, at the time when every ſon was born. And if we add together the ages of the fathers, when their ſeveral ſons were born, and the years of *Noah*'s life at the time of the Deluge, we ſhall form chronological tables of the beſt authority, from the Creation to the Deluge, after this manner.

Years before the Birth of Chriſt.

	Proofs.	Table I. Years, and begat	II. Born in Yr. of World	III. Lived in all, Years	IV. Lived with *Adam*	V. Lived with *Noah*
4004	Gen. v. 3, Adam lived	130	1	930	Yrs 800	
	6, Seth lived	105	130	912	695	84
	9, Enos lived	90	235	905	605	179
	12, Cainan lived	70	325	910	535	234
	15, Mahalaleel lived	65	395	895	470	366
	18, Jared lived	162	460	962	365	
	21, Enoch lived	65	622	365	243	600
	25, Methuſelah lived	187	687	969	56	595
	28, Lamech lived	182	874	777		
2348	vii. 11, Noah, at the Deluge	600 Yrs. old	1065			

In all - - 1656 Years from the Creation to the Flood.

According to Table I. if you add together the years from the creation of *Adam* to the birth of *Methuſelah*, you will find that *Adam* was 687 years old when *Methuſelah* was born. And, as *Adam* lived in all 930 years, as in Table III. if you ſubtract 687 from 930, there will remain 243, which is the year of *Methuſelah*'s life when *Adam* died. Therefore *Methuſelah*

Methuſelah lived 243 years with *Adam*. In the ſame way of computation you may find how long any of the junior Patriarchs lived with *Adam*, as in Table IV.

If to the year of *Enos*'s life, when *Cainan* was born, and to the year of *Lamech*'s life, when *Noah* was born, you add all the intermediate years, you will find they are 821, which is the age of *Enos* when *Noah* was born: but *Enos* lived 905 years; from which ſubtract 821, and the remainder is 84, the number of years in which old *Enos* and young *Noah* were cotemporaries. And in the ſame way you may find how long any of the ſenior preceding Patriarchs lived with *Noah*, as in Table V.

So likewiſe, if you add together the years from the birth of *Methuſelah* to the flood, you will find them to be 969; which is juſt the time that *Methuſelah* lived, as in Table III. Hence we may conclude, that *Methuſelah* died juſt before the flood came; and *Noah* being then 600 years old, he had lived juſt ſo long with *Methuſelah*.

So again, if you add the years from the birth of *Lamech* to the flood, you will find them to be 782 years; and whereas *Lamech* lived but 777 years, it follows, that *Lamech* died five years before the flood came. Therefore, all the Patriarchs, except *Noah*, were dead, when *Noah* entered into the ark.

From the above account it appears, that *Methuſelah* lived with *Adam* 243 years, and doubtleſs converſed with him the greateſt part of that time; and ſo had opportunity abundantly ſufficient to receive from *Adam* an account of what he knew concerning the creation, and all the tranſactions and events contained in the firſt four chapters of *Geneſis*. And as *Noah* lived 600 years with *Methuſelah*, he had time ſufficient to learn the ſame account from him, and may well be ſuppoſed to have carried it with him entire into the ark. And this may be one reaſon of the longevity of the antediluvians; which muſt be reſolved into the ſole will of God, and can be accounted for no other way. They lived ſo long, in order to preſerve, and hand down to poſterity, religious knowledge, in that period of time when it could not be committed to writing; and when it would have been either totally loſt, or miſerably depraved, had men lived no longer than 70 or 80 years. Beſides, their longevity contributed to the more ſpeedy peopling of the world, and to the bringing of neceſſary arts, in tillage, building and clothing, to a greater perfection.

Ver. 1. זה ספר תולדת אדם *This is the book of the generations of Adam*; that is to ſay, this is the pedigree, or the genealogy of the deſcendants of *Adam*. So *Mat.* i. 1. *The book of the generation*, is the genealogy *of Jeſus Chriſt*.

Ver. 3. As we know that *Adam* had both *Cain* and *Abel* before *Seth* was born, ſo both he, and the other Patriarchs, might have ſeveral other children before thoſe that are named in this liſt; it being, probably, the deſign of *Moſes* to ſet down only thoſe perſons by whom the line of *Noah* was drawn from *Seth*, by their true anceſtors, whether they were the eldeſt of the family, or not.

Ver. 21.—and begat *Methuſelah*. It is the ingenious conjecture of *Ainſworth*,

infworth, that מתושלח is a word compounded of מות *he dieth*, and ושלח for ומשלח *and an emiſſion*; as much as to ſay, *when he dieth, ere ſhall be an emiſſion*, or inundation, *of waters*. Thus *Enoch* may be ppoſed to have predicted the deluge in the name which he gave his n *Methuſelah*, with this particular circumſtance, that the deluge ſhould ppen in the year in which his ſon ſhould die; as it certainly did. owever we have the authority of an Apoſtle, that *Enoch* was a Pro- net, and did foreſee, and foretell the deluge to that generation of men. *ude*, ver. 14, 15. *And Enoch alſo, the ſeventh from Adam, propheſied of theſe,* of ſuch men as theſe, *ſaying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thouſands his Saints*, or with myriads of his holy Angels, *to execute judgment pon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly eds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard*, unreaſon- ble, contumacious, blaſphemous *ſpeeches, which ungodly ſinners have oken againſt him.* This, I apprehend, in its primary intention, is a redictiou of the deluge, by which God would puniſh that impious ace which then inhabited the earth. But as their deſtruction by the eluge is made an example of the vengeance which God will execute pon all impenitently wicked at the laſt day, (2 *Pet.* ii. 5.) ſo *Enoch*'s rophecy will ſuit the wicked of all ages, who ſhall certainly meet with like reward of their deeds.

Ver. 22. ויתהלך חנוך את־ האלהים *And Enoch walked* diligently *ith*, or unto, *God*, and in a manner agreeable and pleaſing to God. And ſo did *Noah*, chap. vi. 9. In this conſtruction (with את) התהלך s uſed but once more, 1 *Sam.* xxv. 15; and there it implies friendſhip nd benevolence on the part of thoſe they converſed with. Therefore he Apoſtle rightly inſerts the idea of *pleaſing God* in the account he ives of *Enoch*'s tranſlation, *Heb.* xi. 5, 6; and argues well, that *Enoch*'s leaſing God, was the effect of his faith in God, and in a future re- ard. *For without faith it is impoſſible to pleaſe God*, or to walk with, or o come unto him, as *Enoch* did. *For he that cometh unto God, muſt*, in he very nature of the thing, *believe that he is, and that he is the rewarder f them that diligently ſeek him.* [Obſerve—*pleaſing God, coming unto God, nd diligently ſeeking him*, are ſynonymous, and all included in the ſenſe f *walking with God.*] By faith *Enoch* led a very religious and hea- enly life. His thoughts and affections were removed from things be- ow, and fixed upon things above. He had a deep ſenſe of God and is perfections, delighted in his ways, behaved as always in his ſight, nd conſtantly ſtudied to pleaſe him, and promote his glory. Being of character ſo excellent, and withal a perſon of eminent note, and great nduſtry in oppoſing the growing wickedneſs of the world, God was leaſed to reward his piety, and give the reſt of mankind a demonſtra- ion of a future ſtate of glory, the inheritance of the holy and virtuous, y tranſlating him alive, without ſeeing death, into heaven. It is not mprobable, that he was tranſlated in ſome viſible manner as *Elijah* was fterwards, by a glorious appearance of the *Shechinah*, from whence ome heavenly miniſters might be detached to convey him to a better vorld. This happened 57 years after *Adam*'s death, in the year of the vorld 987, and 669 years before the deluge.

Ver.

Ver. 29. *And Lamech called his ſon's name Noah*, [reſt or refreſhment from נוח to reſt, to take repoſe,] *ſaying, This ſame ſhall comfort us concerning our work, and toil of our hands, becauſe of the ground, which the Lord hath curſed.* *Lamech* might give his ſon this name when he found he had an extraordinary genius for agriculture, and was likely, by his uſeful inventions, to diminiſh the very great toil which had hitherto attended the tillage of the earth. See chap. ix. 20, 21.

CHAP. XVIII.

Of the DELUGE.

Gen. Chapters VI. and VII.

GEN. iv. 26.—*then it was begun to call by the name of the Lord.* Or then, in the days of *Enos*, the family of *Seth*, which adhered to God and his worſhip, began to give themſelves a denomination expreſſive of their relation and regards to God; that is to ſay, to aſſume the title of *the Sons*, or Children *of God*, as in chap. vi. 2. in order to diſtinguiſh and ſeparate themſelves from the irreligious family of *Cain*. Which title was alſo uſed after the flood. *Job* i. 6. ii. 1.

But (chap. vi. 1. which is in connexion with chap. iv. 26, the intermediate chapter being a genealogical parentheſis) [*But when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them*, &c.] The families of *Seth* and *Cain*, increaſing and ſpreading upon the earth, at length met and unhappily mixed together. For the ſons of God, by the inſtigation of ſenſual appetite, without regard to reaſon or religion, joined themſelves in affinity to *Cain*'s impious poſterity, by marrying their beautiful women; the conſequence of which was, that they were ſoon corrupted by the profane converſation of their new relations. The virtuous and godly, in marrying both themſelves and children, ſhould be careful to keep within the limits of religion. A wife is the foundation of many other relations, and commonly has a great influence upon a man and his family; but it is a relation we can chooſe for ourſelves: and in a caſe of ſo great importance, we ſhould neither follow the luſt of covetouſneſs, nor of carnal deſires, but the rules of religion, and the fear of God.

Thus, notwithſtanding the Divine Manifeſtations, and the preaching of *Enoch* and *Noah*, and, probably, of other good men, the contagion of wickedneſs by degrees infected the whole earth, and turned it into a ſcene

cene of impiety, lewdneſs, and injuſtice. The iſſue of the aforeſaid iſorderly marriages joined the worſt part; and growing up without ny ſenſe of religion and virtue, became wholly engaged in ſenſual ambitious purſuits, and joining, or imitating a lewd and impious race of iants, which were then in the earth, they affected to be men of reown for great and valorous exploits, by all methods of oppreſſion and iolence, ſubjecting all others to their wills and luſts; and every where xtinguiſhing a ſenſe of God, both by their wicked, *ungodly deeds*, and *heir hard*, contumacious, blaſphemous *ſpeeches* againſt him, and his holy aws, (*Jude* 15.) deſpiſing his goodneſs, and diſdaining the reſtraints of is government; till *all the earth was corrupt before God, and filled with violence*, ver. 13. *every imagination of the thoughts of their hearts* being *only vil continually*, ver. 5; which cut off all hopes of their amendment, heir minds being wholly intent upon gratifying their ambition and uſt.

In relation to the ſad condition of the world, the firſt thing that God declared, probably, from the *Shechinah* in the thin aſſembly of his worſhippers, was this, (ver. 3.) *My Spirit ſhall not always ſtrive with man*, &c. This is the ſpirit (1 Pet. iii. 19, 20.) *by which* our Lord *went and preached* [not in perſon, but by ſuch preachers as *Enoch* and *Noah*, 2 Pet. ii. 5] *unto the ſpirits* [which are now, i. e. at the time of the Apoſtle's writing] *in priſon* [confined in the ſtate of the dead, and reſerved in ſafe cuſtody to the day of judgment], *which ſometimes were diſobedient in the days of Noah, while the ark was in preparing*. *My Spirit ſhall not always ſtrive*, or debate, *with man*, for his reformation, בשגם הוא בישר eo quod profecto ille caro, *ſeeing that really he is* [nothing but] *fleſh*, altogether fleſhly, void of all virtuous principles, and therefore uncapable of being reformed by any means proper to be applied to a rational nature. Violence, or coaction, cannot make him good, and he will not attend to any methods of perſuaſion. But where the reformation of moral agents cannot be effected, it is fit and reaſonable that they ſhould be deſtroyed; for it is to no purpoſe to continue in being a race of creatures, who live in direct oppoſition to the perfections of God, and all the wiſe and good ends of their creation; and who therefore might as well never have been made at all, becauſe rendered utterly incapable of honouring God their Maker, of enjoying themſelves, or being uſeful to others. It muſt be inconſiſtent with the Divine Perfections, and all the good and wiſe ends of his government, to make that life the object of his providential care and liberality, which is thus miſerably perverted. On the contrary, ſuch are the nuiſance, corruption, diſorder, and plague of the creation; and for that reaſon it is agreeable, not only to juſtice, but to goodneſs, and beneficence, that ſuch ſhould be removed out of the creation. Hence it is, that God, ſpeaking על־ דברת בני אדם after the manner of men, is ſaid *to repent, and to be grieved, that* he *had made man on the earth*, and was reſolved to deſtroy them. Ver. 6, 7.

COROLLARY I. Religion and virtue are the ſoul and ſupport of the univerſe; which being totally taken away, no reaſon can be given why any worlds or agents ſhould exiſt.

COROLLARY II.

COROLLARY II. The holy Scriptures, which assure us the wages of sin is death, and constantly affirm, that the impenitent workers of iniquity shall be destroyed, do give us infallibly a just and true account of things, which demands the whole attention of our minds.

It was determined, because it was fit, that the world so vicious should be destroyed. And the great God might destroy them in what way he should judge most proper, without any injustice on his part, or on the part of any agents which he might employ. He might have destroyed them by fire from heaven, as *Sodom*, &c. or by pestilence, or by destroying angels, 1 *Chron.* xxi. 12, 27. 2 *Chron.* xxxii. 21. Or he might have given a commission to any one more righteous nation among them, had there been any such, to destroy all the rest by the sword, and a right to enter upon all their possessions, as in the case of the wicked *Canaanites*, *Deut.* vii. 2. ix. 5. *Lev.* xviii. 26, &c. For the property of life, and of all possessions, belongs originally and absolutely to God alone. But he chose to destroy them by a deluge, or general inundation.

Not that the Divine Wisdom intended to extirpate the human race; the design was not to extirpate, but to reform; and therefore the Lord was graciously pleased to respite the judgment, the impious world had deserved, for 120 years, ver. 3. This was to shew that he had no pleasure in their destruction, and to give them space for repentance, that their ruin, if possible, might be prevented. Thus *the long-suffering of God waited* for the conversion of the *disobedient in the days of Noah, while the ark was preparing*, 1 Pet. iii. 20. *Noah* was an excellent person, *a just man and perfect*, who, like *Enoch*, *walked with God*, ver. 9. Him and his family God was pleased graciously to preserve; that from so good a stock the human race might be again propagated, and religion restored in the world. With him God purposed to *establish his covenant*, or grant of blessings, ver. 18. The grace of God to mankind, especially the grand scheme of redemption, was not to fail, or to be suspended; therefore the Lord directed *Noah* to build a vessel in shape like a large chest, every way convenient for floating upon the waters, and for containing all the creatures which it was to receive, ver. 30. * [See PIERCE on *Heb.* xi. 7.] *Noah* without delay expressed his humble and entire faith in the Divine Warning; and in obedience to it, applied himself to the building of the ark, for the saving of himself and family, (*Heb.* xi. 7.) *by the which he condemned* the unbelieving and impenitent *world, and became heir of the righteousness*, [or became intitled to the salvation] *which is by faith.*

Note—*Noah* is commonly, and, I think, justly supposed to have been 120 years in building the ark, for that was the time *the long-suffering* of God waited; which time of long-suffering was, *while the ark was in preparing*, as in 1 Pet. iii. 20. At the beginning of this time, *Noah*'s three sons, *Shem*, *Ham*, and *Japhet*, were not born; for *Noah* was now but 480 years old, and none of his foresaid sons were born till he was 500.

	Cubits.	*Feet.*	*Yards.*
* *The length of the ark*	300 equal to	450 equal to	150 at least.
The breadth	— 50	75	25.
The height	— 30	45	15.

500. chap. v. 32. And therefore that paragraph, ver. 17, &c. wherein mention is made of *Noah*'s ſons, *Shem*, *Ham*, and *Japhet*, and their wives, muſt have been ſpoken after the ark was finiſhed.

When the ark was finiſhed, and *Noah* and his family, the animals and their food, ſafe lodged in it, about the 6th of November, in the year of the world 1656, by the mighty power of God, *the fountains of the great deeps were broken up*, chap. vii. 11. the ſea overflowed, being prodigiouſly raiſed by the violent irruption of the ſubterraneous waters; and rain came down from the ſky, not in drops, but in ſtreams and ſpouts, *the windows of heaven were opened*; and both together eaſily prevailed over the earth, and put it out of the power of the wiſeſt and ſtrongeſt of men to relieve either themſelves or their friends.

And now, how were the careleſs and impenitent unbelievers ſurpriſed! Conceive them ſecurely going on in the uſual way of life, eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, *Mat.* xxiv. 37; feaſting and revelling, thinking of nothing but ſenſual enjoyments, in contempt of every ſerious admonition: when all on a ſudden the moſt terrible rains and inundations threatened their inevitable deſtruction. How would they be terrified! How would they condemn their own unbelief, and be forced to own there was a juſt and righteous God, who will execute vengeance on all the incurable workers of iniquity! This is a ſpecimen of the final deſtruction of the ungodly at the laſt day, which God hath revealed. Let us not harden our hearts, but believe and prepare.

Chap. vi. 17. *And behold I, even I*, by my own immediate operation, *do bring* המבול *a flood of waters upon the earth, to deſtroy all fleſh.* The word מבול in its primary ſenſe, doth not include the idea of a flood; it comes from נבל which, with relation to plants and animals, originally ſignifies, to be ſo exhauſted of natural moiſture and ſpirits, in which their life conſiſts, as to be withered, or dead. And it is applied peculiarly to the deluge, and to nothing but that, under the notion of extinction of life; and ſo the phraſe המבול מים may be tranſlated, *an extinction of life by waters.* It is only uſed in *Gen.* chapters the 6th, 7th, 9th, 10th; and in *Pſal.* xxix. 10. *The Lord ſitteth* [ישב ſat, or did ſit] *upon*, or at, *the flood*, the extinction of life at the deluge. He then ſat upon the ſeat of judgment, executing vengeance upon that wicked generation; *yea, the Lord ſitteth King for ever.* AINSWORTH upon *Pſal.* xxix. 10.

This diſpenſation, as all the reſt, had relation to the morals of mankind: and the evident deſign of it was to leſſen the quantity of vice and profaneneſs, and to preſerve and advance religion and virtue in the earth; the great end for which the earth, and man in it, were created. This end it was well adapted to obtain in the then preſent ſtate of things, and in all future generations. In the preſent ſtate of things, it prevented a total corruption: for if the whole tainted part had not been cut off, a ſingle family would ſoon have been drawn in, or deſtroyed; and then the whole globe muſt have been ruined, and the ſchemes and purpoſes of God, from the beginning of the world, had been defeated. But by reſerving a ſelect family for the continuation of the human

human ſpecies, the ſyſtem of the Divine Counſels was preſerved entire, and the moſt proper method was deviſed for the eſtabliſhment of religion and virtue in the new world; as the family of *Noah* enjoyed much greater advantages for this end, than the family of *Adam* at the beginning of things.

Noah was not, like *Adam*, a new unexperienced being, ignorant of every thing, but what he received from revelation. *Noah*, beſides the benefit of revelation, and intercourſe with heaven, had the whole compaſs of ancient antediluvian knowledge from the creation, in his own poſſeſſion. He was a man of the moſt eminent abilities, and the moſt ſteady integrity. *Adam* was eaſily ſeduced; but in the midſt of an univerſal degeneracy, *Noah* firmly adhered to truth and religion; and when he was warned of God to prepare the ark, even 120 years before the deluge, or any appearances of it, ſo ſtrong was his faith, or perſuaſion of the Divine Power, Juſtice, and Veracity, that he applied himſelf to the work, and completed it, ſurrounded as he was with the infidelity and contempt of all the world. A man of ſo much underſtanding, and of ſuch a ſpirit, would not fail to communicate all he knew to his poſterity, nor to inculcate it ſtrongly upon their hearts.

But his family, *Shem*, *Ham*, and *Japhet*, with their wives, were eye-witneſſes of the dreadful inundation, and had the moſt affecting proof of their own deliverance. They reſided full twelve months in the ark, from the beginning of the deluge to the end of it. And it is eaſy to conceive how they would be affected in ſuch a moving ſituation. They knew this ſhocking cataſtrophe was not an unfortunate accident, but occaſioned by the wickedneſs of the world; therefore all the terrors of the deluge muſt give them the moſt ſenſible perception of the malignant nature of wickedneſs, that it is infinitely odious to God, and dreadfully pernicious to ſinners. They muſt be convinced of the uncontrolable power and dominion of the Moſt High, the impoſſibility of eſcaping his vengeance, what a fearful thing it is to fall into his hands, and how much they were obliged, both in intereſt and duty, to reverence and obey him.

On the other hand, their preſervation from ſo terrible a calamity, in the midſt of the ruins of all the world beſides, muſt be a very ſtriking demonſtration of God's favour and compaſſion to themſelves; which was naturally adapted to make the deepeſt impreſſions of gratitude, love, and duty; eſpecially as they could not but be ſenſible, that ſuch a great and miraculous deliverance was particularly owing to the eminent piety of their father, *Gen.* vii. 1. Thus they would be well prepared and diſpoſed to acknowledge and admit the excellency of thoſe principles and practices which had been, through Divine Goodneſs, their ſecurity in the general deſolation.

And when they left the ark, all the diſmal appearances of the deſolate world, the ruins of palaces, towns, and cities, the ſadly changed face of countries, which they had ſeen in a cultivated, flouriſhing ſtate, the bones of men and other animals, ſtrewed over all the face of the earth, would have a natural tendency to fix upon their minds the good impreſſions they had received in the ark, and render them ſolicitous to inculcate the principles of religion upon their children. Add to all

this,

is, that *Noah*, who lived 349 years after the flood, and whose pious monitions would be of much greater weight and authority than hen he was an unsuccessful preacher of righteousness to the antediluans, was the instructor, and, for some time at least, the governor of e new world.

From all this it will appear, that this was a very just and proper disnsation for reforming mankind, and restoring religion in the earth; ell adapted to that thoughtless age, (when they seem not to have atined to any considerable degree of reasoning, and therefore not disposed to be wrought upon by argument) and to the state of things in when no regular civil governments and laws were formed for the adinistration of justice, and the restraint of injury and wrong; and it pears to have had the intended effect, by suppressing violence and rane, which never any more universally prevailed in the world; and fixing a sense of religion upon the minds of men, which afterwards as indeed perverted, but not quite extinguished. And as it stands reorded in sacred writ, it is a warning to the remotest generations. In hich view it is referred to, 2 *Pet.* ii. 5. *And* [God] *spared not the old orld, but saved Noah, the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, inging in the flood upon the world of the ungodly; and turning the cities Sodom and Gomorrha into ashes — making them an example unto those et afterwards should live ungodly.*

CHAP. XIX.

Of NOAH's *Sacrifice, and the Divine Intercourse on that Occasion.*

Gen. viii. to the End of the 9th Chapter.

NOAH, being restored to the possession of the earth, entered upon it with a solemn act of Divine Worship, according to the original institution, *Gen.* viii. 20. *He builded an altar unto the Lord, and ook of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl*, i. e. of such beasts and owls as God hath ordained for Sacrifices, *and offered Burnt-Offerings pon the Altar*; which as they were intended to denote, so they were *Noah* accompanied with, faith in the mercy of God, thankfulness or the late miraculous deliverance, and the dedication of himself, and f all his, to the honour and obedience of God, through the promised Redeemer; of whom *Noah* and the Patriarchs, we may well suppose, had a general knowledge and expectation. The Acceptableness f this act of devotion to God, is signified by his *smelling a sweet savour*, ריח הניח ver. 21. This one may call *Hieroglyphic* language. *Hieroglyphics*, which by bodily sensations, or external representations, denoted abstract

abſtract notions, or the ſentiments of the mind, were the literature
the firſt ages of the world. So here, the approbation of the judgme
or what is pleaſing to the mind, is ſignified by an odour or fragran
grateful to the ſmell. Or the taſte and reliſh of the body is transfe
red to the taſte and reliſh of the mind. This language is frequent
uſed in the Levitical law; as in *Lev.* i. 9, 13, 17. ii. 2, 9. iii. 5, &
meaning the acceptableneſs of the Sacrifice or Offering. So the fr
grance of burnt incenſe repreſents the acceptableneſs of ſincere praye
Pſal. cxli. 2. *Luke* i. 10. *Rev.* viii. 3, 4.

It is alſo applied, in the ſame ſenſe, to the offering and ſacrifice of o
Lord, *Epheſ.* v. 2. *And walk in love, as Chriſt alſo hath loved us, and ha
given himſelf for us, an Offering and Sacrifice to God for a ſweet-ſmelli
ſavour.* God, who is a ſpirit, can reliſh, or be pleaſed with, only th
which is morally or ſpiritually good, the love and obedience of th
heart: this is the only ſavour that is grateful to him. And therefor
the Sacrifice of our Lord muſt have been an actual exhibition of ob
dience and love; and the Sacrifices of *Noah*, and of the *Iſraelites*, mu
have been hieroglyphic repreſentations of, or inſtructions in, the lik
moral diſpoſitions, in order to expreſs, or produce them in the hearts
the worſhippers. *Smelling a ſweet ſavour* is plainly hieroglyphic or figu
rative language; and therefore the Sacrifice, or Offering, the objec
of ſuch ſmelling, muſt alſo be figurative, repreſenting thoſe good diſpo
ſitions which were, or ought to have been, in the worſhipper's heart
and which were in the higheſt and moſt perfect degree in our Lord
The Sacrifice of a clean beaſt or fowl figuratively repreſented what th
worſhipper was, or ought to be and do; and our Lord really was, an
perfectly did what the Sacrifice repreſented. Hence *Sacrifice* is applie
to beneficent actions, or actions morally good, and pleaſing to God
Pſal. iv. 5. l. 14, 23. *Phil.* iv. 18. *Heb.* xiii. 15, 16. And in *the Boo
of Wiſdom* is applied to the whole of a virtuous life, *as gold in the furnac
hath he tried them,* [afflicted good men,] *and received them as a Burnt
Offering.*

The ſmell, or ſavour, of a perſon, or thing, is the quality of it, goo
or evil, which occaſions the approbation or diſlike of thoſe that paſs
judgment upon it. *Exod.* v. 21. *You have made* ריחנו *our ſavour*, that i
us which is the object of *Pharaoh*'s judgment, *to be abhorred*, to ſtink
in the eyes, the opinion, *of Pharaoh.* So *Gen.* xxxiv. 30. *Jer.* xlviii
11. *Moab hath been at eaſe from his youth, and he hath ſettled on his lees
—therefore his taſte,* טעמו his reliſh *remaineth in him, and his ſcent,* ריחו
his ſavour, his bad qualities, *is not changed.* 2 Cor. ii. 14, 15, 16. *Now
thanks be unto God, who always cauſeth us to triumph in Chriſt, and maket
manifeſt*, diſplays, *the ſavour,* της οσμης the excellent qualities, *of hi
knowledge*, the knowledge of Chriſt, *by us in every place. For we are t
God,* ευωδιαν, *the ſweet-ſmelling ſavour of Chriſt*, [*i. e.* my miniſtry is t
God a Sacrifice of a ſweet-ſmelling ſavour, which I offer unto him o
the behalf of *Chriſt.* See *Rom.* xv. 16.] *both in regard of them that ar
ſaved, and alſo of them that periſh.* [For in both caſes the counſels an
ſchemes of Divine Wiſdom are accompliſhed.] Though *to the one w
are,* οσμη, *the ſavour of death unto death; and to the other we are the ſavou
o*

life unto life. [*i. e.* to the minds of the one my preaching is offensive; nd rejecting it, they are advancing towards eternal death: to the minds the other it is grateful and pleasing; and embracing it, they are adancing towards life eternal.] *And who is sufficient for these things* of so reat consequence? Note—*A saviour of death unto death*, is a saviour hich occasions their advancing towards eternal death.

Upon the solemn occasion of *Noah*'s Sacrifice, *the Lord said in his eart*, i. e. determined, or resolved, that he would *not again curse the round any more for man's sake*; (chap. viii. 21.) *for* [כ though] *the nagination of man's heart is* [should be] *evil from his youth. From his uth*, denotes a corruption of manners of long continuance. See *Isai.* lvii. 12, 15. *Jer.* iii. 25. *Ezek.* xxiii. 8. See also *Job* xxxi. 18. The ord was also pleased to repeat to *Noah* and his sons the same blessing pon the propagation of the human species, and the same marks of diinction upon our nature, as he had given *Adam* at his creation, with additional grant of animal food, (*chap.* ix. 3, 4) with this restricon, that they should not *eat the flesh* of an animal *in the life thereof*, *e blood thereof*; or that they should not eat any flesh cut off from any nimal while it is alive. At the same time God made a covenant with *oah*, and with every living creature, or he made a free and absolute rant or promise to them, that *all flesh* should *not any more be cut off with e waters of a flood.* Of which more hereafter.

What is here particularly to be observed is, the institution of magisracy, and the punishment of murder. Ver. 6. *Whoso sheds man's blood, man shall his blood be shed.* Ver. 5. *And surely your blood of your lives will require, at the hand of every beast will I require it; and at the hand of man, the hand of every man's brother, will I require the life of man.* The beast hat killed, or the man that murdered a man, is here commanded to be ut to death *by man*, i. e. by the magistrate or judge. Here courts of dicature are authorized, not only for the punishment of murder, but, y parity of reason, of any other great offences which may effect life early as much as murder.

This seems to be the original institution of magistracy, of which we ave not hitherto the least intimation in the sacred history. On the conary, it appears from the case of *Cain*, (Gen. iv. 15.) and of *Lamech*, Gen. iv. 23, 24.) that murder, the greatest of crimes, was left to be unished as God in his providence should see fit. And if murder, much ore every lesser instance of injury. It seems probable, there were no parate states, nor regular governments, among the antediluvians; but hat, as they spread over the face of the earth, they removed further from e place of public worship, lost a sense of God, and lived in a disorrly manner, exercising violence and outrage, as they had power; and ere instigated by lust, avarice and revenge, till the earth was filled with olence. Which, I apprehend, could not have been the case, under ws and governors armed with power to restrain outrage and injustice; r though governors themselves, and their creatures, may be tyranni and oppressive, yet, for their own security, they will not suffer their bjects to break out into anarchy and licentious invasion of life and roperty, because this is open rebellion against governors. The state of

the old world, probably, was like that of the *Iſraelites*, when there was *no king*, no magiſtrate among them, *but every man did that which was right in his own eyes*, Jud. xxi. 25. Which proves the poſſibility of ſuch a licentious ſtate, and the ſhocking diſorders that would attend it.

The leaving mankind, in the firſt ages of the world, in this looſe and diſcretionary ſtate, certainly, was not to lead them into wickedneſs; but I conceive, to teach them by experience the neceſſity of laws and governors, and the reaſonableneſs of ſubmitting to them. [See Chap. III. § IV. the Corollary.] For even upon the contrary ſuppoſition, that magiſtracy, in ſome form or other, was inſtituted from the beginning of the world, yet it is plain, that mankind in thoſe ages would not bear the yoke, but univerſally ſhook it off. Nor could government, in fact, be permanently eſtabliſhed, till the ruin of the world demonſtrated the neceſſity of it. Therefore, if God did not ſee fit to eſtabliſh magiſtracy from the beginning, it was becauſe he knew mankind would not bear the reſtraints of government with a rational conſent and approbation (without which conſent and approbation, at leaſt from the majority, government could not have been either erected or ſupported), till ſad experience had taught them the utility and importance of it. Thus a particular ſpecies of injuſtice, and even of murder, is permitted under our preſent diſpenſation, and, inſtead of being reſtrained, is eſtabliſhed by law; I mean perſecution, or the taking away of life for difference of ſentiments in religion, which ſubſiſts in moſt Chriſtian countries. And this, I apprehend, the wiſdom of God has permitted, that Chriſtians at length may be rationally convinced of the monſtrous iniquity of ſuch practice, and ſo be generally induced by the ſenſe of their own minds to approve and chooſe goodneſs, love and mutual forbearance; which we hope will be the genius and happy temper of the next enſuing diſpenſation. This is the only method of moral improvement, namely, when the mind, by proper methods, is led to apprehend, and freely embrace, what is right and fit; and, I doubt not, takes place in the gradual advances of all, or of any part of mankind in wiſdom, as well as of particular ſingle perſons. This, with what hath been ſaid before, is the beſt account I can give of this antediluvian diſpenſation.

N. B. The curſe upon *Canaan*, ver. 25. is to be underſtood as affecting only the temporal circumſtances of his poſterity, *a ſervant of ſervants ſhall he be*. As in *Deut.* xxviii. 16, 17, *&c. Curſed ſhall be thy baſket and thy ſtore*. Nor is it to be conſidered in *Noah* as a malevolent wiſh, or imprecation, but ſimply as a prediction of the future ſtate of *Ham*'s poſterity; as appears from the whole of *Noah*'s diſcourſe, which is plainly prophetic.

CHAP. XX

CHAP. XX.

Of the DISPERSION *at the Tower of* BABEL.

Gen. x.

HERE *Moses* gives an account how the earth was peopled by the several families, or descendents of *Noah*'s three sons, *Shem*, *Ham*, and *Japhet*, *ver.* 32. For the particulars of this curious account consult the Commentators, especially Bp. PATRICK. What I would observe is this —— That, after the account of the several nations descended from each of *Noah*'s sons, it is added, as in *ver.* 5. *By these* descendents of *Japhet*, *were the isles*, or transmarine countries, *of the Gentiles divided in their* several *lands*; *every one after his tongue*, or language, *after their families*, *in their nations*. The same is said *ver.* 20, 31. of the posterity of *Ham* and *Shem*. Which plainly signifies, that they did not all speak the same language; but that the descendents from *Noah*'s sons, at least in general, if not several of the particular nations, had a language peculiar to themselves, distinct from the rest, and unintelligible to them. *Noah* and his posterity, while they lived together after the flood, which must be for some considerable time, could have but one and the same language amongst them. How they came to have different languages, and how they were separated into several distant countries, by a very memorable event, *Moses* relates in the next chapter.

When *Noah*'s family was numerous enough, probably the Lord, by the mouth of *Noah*, commanded them to separate into different countries, particularly specified, that the earth might be better cultivated and governed. Certainly their division and removal into *distant* countries (*Gen.* x. 5.) must have been a general public act. And, as *Moses* saith, the earth was divided into nations in *Peleg*'s days, (*ver.* 25, 32.) it seems to imply, that it was done by a divine command, and not accidentally, as they might choose a more convenient situation. Which is more clearly expressed, *Deut.* xxxii. 8. where it is said, *when the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance*, *when he separated the sons of Adam*, [referring to this division of the earth] *he set the bounds of the people*, the adjacent nations, *according to the number of the future children of Israel*, leaving for them a convenient situation, and room sufficient. In prosecution of this design, the whole earth, except perhaps the eldest Patriarchs, and their attendants, journeying from the mother-colony towards the west, and finding a spacious fruitful vale in the land of *Shinar*, there they determined to settle, and build a city and a tower, *reaching up to heaven*, or of a very great height. *Deut.* i. 28. ix. 1. *Psal.* cvii. 25, 26. [An hyperbole.]

Their intention was to *make* themselves *a name*, and to prevent their being *scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth*, (ver. 4.) as God had probably ordered they should. The scheme was to keep together, and

very likely under one one head. *Schultens*, upon *Job* i. 1. derives שם *name*, from the Arabic verb שמה or שמא to be high, elevated, eminent. And according to him, the primary and proper notion of שם is a mark or ſign, ſtanding out, riſing up, or expoſed to open view; a ſtanding mark or title of diſtinction and eminence. 2 *Sam.* vii. 23.——*and to make him a name*, a monument of honour and eminence. *chap.* viii. 13. 1 *Kin.* v. 3, 5. ——*build an houſe unto*, or for, *the name*, honour, eminent diſtinction *of the Lord*, to denote that he is the only true God, and King of the *Iſraelites*. 1 *Kings* viii. 16, 29. 1 *Chron.* xvii. 21.——*to make thee a name*, a monument, *of greatneſs and terribleneſs*. Iſai. xviii. 7. lv. 13.——*it ſhall be to the Lord for a name*, i. e. *for an everlaſting ſign, that ſhall not be cut off*. chap. lxiii. 12, 14. So in this place, *Gen.* xi. 4.—*and let us*, ſay the heads or leaders, *make us a name*, a monument or token of ſuperiority and eminence, I conceive to ſignify to all ſucceeding generations, that they were the true original governors, to whom all mankind ought to be in ſubjection; leſt other leaders ſtarting up ſhould carry off parties, and ſo break the body, and ſet up ſeparate governments. It ſeems to have been a piece of ſtate-policy, to keep all mankind together under the preſent chiefs and their ſucceſſors. And the lofty Tower was probably intended to command every part of the town, and keep off any body of men, that ſhould attempt to break in upon them.

But God, whoſe wiſdom perfectly foreſaw the miſchievous effects of ſuch an attempt, determined to fruſtrate and defeat it. By this ſcheme a great part of the earth muſt for a long time have been uninhabited, uncultivated, and overrun with beggary and wild beaſts; which, as it was, for a long time, according to ancient authors, exerciſed the induſtry and valour of the primitive heroes in hunting and ſubduing them. It was thus *Nimrod*, that mighty hunter, gained his renown. *Gen.* x. 9. *He was a mighty hunter before the Lord.* Which is an Hebrew phraſe, to ſignify the greateſt, and moſt eminent thing of any kind. *Acts* vii. 20. Ασειος τω Θεω, *exceeding fair*; 2 Cor. viii. 1. Την χαριν του Θεου, *the very great liberality beſtowed by the churches of Macedonia.* chap. x. 4. Δυνατα τω Θεω *exceeding powerful.* Pſalm lxxx. 10, 11. ארזי־אל the cedars of God, *the goodly cedars.*

Moſt probably the bad effects which this project would have had upon the minds, the morals, and religion of mankind, was the chief reaſon why God interpoſed to cruſh it as ſoon as it was formed. It manifeſtly had a direct tendency to tyranny, oppreſſion, and ſlavery. Whereas, in forming ſeveral independent governments by a ſmall body of men, the end of government, and the ſecurity of liberty and property, would be much better attended to, and more firmly eſtabliſhed; which, in fact, was generally the caſe, if we may judge of the reſt, by the conſtitution of one of the moſt eminent, the kingdom of *Egypt*. Gen. xlvii. 15—27. The *Egyptians* were maſters of their perſons and properties, till they ſold them to *Pharaoh* for bread: and then their ſervitude amounted to no more than the fifth part of the produce of the country, as an annual tax payable to the king; which is not near ſo much as we, with all our Engliſh liberties, pay yearly to the church and government.

Corruption may creep into religion under any conſtitution; but tyranny and deſpotic power is the readieſt and ſureſt way to deprive men of the uſe of underſtanding and conſcience; and vice and idolatry would hav

ave ſpread much faſter, had the whole world, in one body, been under ne abſolute dominion of vicious, inſolent, idolatrous monarchs. This ould have been a ſtate of things juſt in the oppoſite extreme to the ntediluvian licentiouſneſs, and would have been nearly as pernicious to irtue; as it muſt have ſunk mankind into the baſeſt ſervility of mind, nd have ſtocked the earth with a mean-ſpirited race of mortals, who durſt ot open their own eyes, make any generous uſe of their own faculties, r reliſh the bounty of heaven with pleaſure and thankfulneſs. Ημισυ γαρ αξετης αποαινυται δελιον ημαρ, ſaith Homer (Odyſſ. p. ver. 322.) *Whatever day makes a man a ſlave, takes half his worth away.* "Thus I have heard, ſaith *Longinus*, Sect. XLIV. if what I have heard in this caſe deſerve credit, that the caſes in which dwarfs are kept, not only prevent the future growth of thoſe who are encloſed in them, but alſo diminiſh what bulk they already have, by too cloſe conſtriction of their parts. So ſlavery, be it never ſo eaſy, yet is ſlavery ſtill; and may deſervedly be called, the priſon of the ſoul, and the public dungeon."

For theſe wiſe and beneficent reaſons, I preſume, the Divine Providence interpoſed, and baffled the project; which, in the then circumſtances of the projectors, would otherwiſe have been unhappily ſucceſsful, by confounding and altering their language in ſuch manner, as that ney could not underſtand one another; and ſo were obliged to deſiſt rom the work they had begun, to ſeparate into many ſmaller bodies, nd to ſeek for ſettlements at a diſtance from each other, as the ſeveral ompanies, by the ſameneſs of ſpeech, were capable of converſing ogether, and poſſibly in the very countries which God had marked out or them.

Thus the contagion of wickedneſs, for ſome time at leaſt, had bounds t to it; evil example was confined, and could not ſtretch its influence eyond the limits of one country; nor could wicked projects be carried n with univerſal concurrence by many little colonies, ſeparated by the atural boundaries of mountains, rivers, deſerts, ſeas, and hindered from ſociating together by a variety of languages unintelligible to each ther. And further, in this diſperſed ſtate, they would, whenever God leaſed, be made checks reciprocally upon each other by invaſions and ars; which would weaken the power, and humble the pride of corrupt nd vicious communities. This diſpenſation, therefore, was properly alculated to prevent a ſecond univerſal degeneracy. God therein ealing with men as rational agents, and ſuiting his ſcheme to their reſent ſtate and circumſtances. This Diſperſion probably happened bout 240 years of the flood.

CHAP. XXI.

Of the סוד COUNCIL of GOD; *or a Criticiſm upon thoſe Words*, Let us go down, *Gen.* xi. 7.

ALL allow, that the *Lord's coming down to ſee the City and Tower*, Gen. xi. 5, is to be underſtood ανθρωποπαθως by way of accommodation to our conceptions; and means no more, but that by the effects, he made it appear, that he obſerved their motions, and knew their intentions. This is a very common, and in our preſent embodied ſtate, a very proper way of repreſenting the actions of Deity. But when *Jehovah* is repreſented as ſaying, *Go to, let us go down*, verſe 7, as before, chap. i. 26, he had ſaid, *Let us make man*, &c. learned men have ſuppoſed, that this is to be taken literally, and that God here ſpake to ſome beings included in his own nature and ſubſtance. Whereas this alſo is a figure of ſpeech, which is to be underſtood as the foregoing. Kings tranſact their moſt important affairs in a ſolemn council. Hence, God is pleaſed to repreſent himſelf as having likewiſe his סוד or privy council. And the determinations of his Providence are deſcribed, after the manner of men, as having been made in that Council, in order to expreſs the wiſdom, importance, and certainty of them. Thus, and for this purpoſe, *Jehovah* is here, and in *Gen.* i. 26, repreſented as ſpeaking in his Council, *Let us make man, let us go down, and there confound their language.*

Of this Council, I apprehend, *Job* ſpeaks, chap. xxix. 4.——*when the ſecret* Council בסוד *of God was upon my tabernacle*; when the auguſt Aſſembly, where God's Counſels and Decrees are paſſed, was held, as it were over my habitation; and it ſeemed to be his peculiar care to proſper me and my family. To this Council the Prophets in viſion are ſuppoſed to be admitted as ſtanders-by, and hearers of what is there decreed, and reſolved upon. *Job* xv. 8. הבסוד אלוה תשמע *haſt thou heard*, or been a hearer, *in the ſecret* Council *of God*. Jer. xxiii. 17, 18. *They*, the falſe prophets, *ſay ſtill unto them that deſpiſe me, the Lord hath ſaid, Ye ſhall have peace*; *and they ſay unto every one that walketh after the imagination of his own heart, No evil ſhall come unto you.* כי מי עמד בסוד יהוה *For who hath ſtood* [as a waiter, or ſervant, ready to carry God's meſſages to his people. So לפני מלך עמד one that ſtands before the King, is properly the King's Miniſter. And when *Eliſha* ſaith (2 *Kings*, iii. 14.), *as the Lord liveth, before whom I ſtand*, he means, *whoſe Miniſter I am.*] *in the ſecret Council*, or Aſſembly, *of Jehovah, and hath ſeen and heard his word?* q. d. Which of you hath been wrapt in viſion, and admitted as a ſtander-by and hearer in that great Aſſembly, where God's Councils are held, and hath brought a meſſage to his people from thence? No, you go

o presumptuously with messages of your own heads. Verse 21. *I have ot sent these prophets, yet they ran: I have not spoken to them, yet they pro- hesied.* ואם עמדו בסודי *But if they had stood in my Council, and had used my people to hear my words, then they should have turned them from their vil way, and from the evil of their doings.* This connexion of the Pro- hets with the Council of God, may serve to explain *Jonah*'s fleeing *from he presence of*, or from before, *the Lord*, *Jon.* i. 2. He was sent upon a ightful and dangerous message; but as he judged, I suppose, that the Council of God was held in no other land but that of *Israel*, he hoped o break off his connexion with it, by removing to a remote country mong the Gentiles.

The vision of *Micaiah* (1 Kings xxii. 19——24.) will set this affair n the strongest light. *And he said, Hear thou the word of the Lord: I aw the Lord sitting on his throne, and all the host of heaven standing by him, n his right hand and on his left. And the Lord said, Who shall persuade Ahab, hat he may go up, and fall at Ramoth Gilead? And one said on this man- er, and another on that manner. And there came forth a spirit, and stood fore the Lord, and said, I will persuade him. And the Lord said unto him, Wherewith? And he said, I will go forth, and I will be a lying spirit in the outh of all his prophets. And he said, Thou shalt persuade him, and prevail lso: go forth and do so.* Here the Lord is shewn in Council, after the anner of men, deliberating upon this affair. Now, whether there was ny such real consultation is not necessary for us to inquire. Thus it as represented in all its circumstances to the prophet, and stampt upon is mind in vision; and it was God who directed him to use it in this rm, as appears plainly from the solemn introduction, *Hear thou there- re the word of the Lord.* And though it should only be a parabolical sion, yet the drift and substance of it was a divine infallible truth, amely, that *Ahab*'s prophet prophesied lies; and this by the Divine ermission, and the instigation of the wicked spirit, who was a liar from e beginning, and the father of lies.

A passage similar to this, is that in the book of *Job*, chap. i. 6. *low there was a day when the Sons of God*, Angels, *came to present emselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them. And the ord said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the ord, &c.* And again, chap. ii. 1, &c. Here we see is the same and assembly in the case of *Job*, as in the foregoing instance *Ahab.* The same host of heaven, called here *the Sons of God*, pre- nting themselves before Jehovah, as in the vision of *Micaiah* they are id to stand on his right hand and on his left. A wicked spirit appears nong them, here called *Satan*, an adversary, and there *a lying spirit*; oth of them bent on mischief, and ready to do hurt, as far as God ould give them leave. And the meaning in both cases is the same, at God in his wise providence permitted Satan to afflict *Job*, and the ing spirit to deceive *Ahab.* Only *Micaiah* delivers his representation a Prophet, in the exercise of his office, and as he received it, that to say, in a vision; *I saw the Lord sitting on his throne*, &c. The her [probably *Job* himself, who was not unacquainted with the *uncil* of God, as we have seen], as an historian, interweaves it with e history in the plain, narrative stile, *There was a day*, &c. The things

delivered to us by both these sacred writers, are in substance the same equally high, and above the reach of mere human sight and knowledge Note——the representations of this kind are founded in the doctrine o Angels, good and bad, especially the former, as the instruments of Pro vidence. A point revealed, no doubt, from the beginning, and wel understood in the earliest ages; witness *Jacob*'s ladder, with *the Angels o God ascending and descending upon it.* Gen. xxviii. 12.

Isaiah also in a vision stood in the Council of God, chap. vi. 1, &c *Where he saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his trai filled the temple. Above it stood the Seraphim*, the angelic host, &c. Th matter in consultation was, verse 7. *Whom shall I send, and who will g* upon the prophetic errand *for us*, using deliberative language, and th plural number, as in the two texts under consideration, *Let us make ma* ——*Let us go down.*——*Isaiah* readily offered his service, verse 8 And the Lord delivered to him his commission and message, verse 9 And he said, *Go and tell this people*, &c.

Ezekiel in the same manner in vision stood in the Council of the Lord chap. i. 1. *The heavens were* (i. e. the temple was) *opened, and I saw visions of God*; namely, the four living creatures, or Cherubims, repre senting the church of God attending upon *the glory of the Lord*, or th Shechinah, verse 28, and seated upon a throne, verse 26. *And he sai unto* Ezekiel, chap. ii. 3. *Son of man, I send thee to the children o Israel, &c.*

Zechariah, too, chap. i. 7, 8, &c. to the end of the sixth chapter, i represented as conversing with the Lord in his Council, and with a Angel; though the scene is not described so distinctly as in the othe places.

John also *in the spirit*, i. e. in a vision, Rev. i. 10, was present in th same Council of God, described in the 4th and 5th chapters of the *Re velation*, chap. iv. 1. *A door was opened in heaven*, in the temple; *Joh* was invited to attend, a throne was set in heaven, with a majestic Per sonage upon it, attended by the Cherubim, or the Church, and th Angelic Host. The matter, which was there very solemnly transacted was the future state of the Church, to the end of the world.

This is the prophetic way of telling us *how* a thing was done, whic really was done, but in a way to us invisible. Thus things of the greate importance were represented in the strongest images to the mind of th Prophet; and in this way Infinite Wisdom would have them describe and represented to us. Nor should we quarrel with our Maker fo creating us with such faculties as are most affected and impressed wit truths that are conveyed in this manner; for those truths make th deepest impression which first enter like a picture into the imagination and from thence are stamped upon the memory.

Note—— *Homer*, previously to Events, represents the consultation of his fictitious deities in the same narrative way, to denote, that a things are subject to an over-ruling Providence. A method practise long before him, and very probably derived from the truly-inspired.

I shall only further observe, (1.) That סוד is sometimes applied t worshipping assemblies, *Psal.* lxxxix. 7. cxi. 1. (2) Sometimes i signifies the thing that is transacted, commanded, or established in th

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ouncil of God. *Pſal.* xxv. 14. *Prov.* iii. 32. So it may be under-ood, *Amos* iii. 7. *The Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth* סודו *s ſecret Council unto his ſervants the Prophets.*

CHAP. XXII.

Of the PATRIARCHAL RELIGION.

WE ſhould now advance to the next Divine Diſpenſation, the calling of *Abraham*; but, before we proceed, it may be of uſe to ain the cleareſt notions we are able of the ſtate of Religion among he nations after the deluge.

About 425 years after the deluge, and 185 after the diſperſion, the Lord *ſaid unto Abraham*, (Gen. xii. 1.) *Get thee out of thy country*, which vas *Ur* of the Chaldees, (*Gen.* xi. 28.) *and from thy kindred, and from hy father's houſe, unto a land that I will ſhew thee.* Compare this with *Joſh.* xxiv. 2. *Joſhua ſaid unto all the people, thus ſaith the Lord God of Iſrael, your fathers dwelt on the other ſide of the flood* [in *Meſopotamia*, beyond the river *Euphrates*], *in old time, even Terah, the father of Abraham, nd the father of Nachor; and they ſerved other Gods*; that is to ſay, they were idolaters. Some learned men ſuppoſe, that in the days of *Reu*, i. e. ome time before the year 370, after the deluge, the *Egyptians* and *Babylonians* began to introduce idolatrous prigciples and practices; which, rom the fore-quoted place in *Joſhua*, it is certain, crept into the family f *Shem*; ſome, and ſome of the principal of his poſterity, growing ain in their imaginations, and worſhipping the heavenly bodies, with a livine, or however with an undue honour. For this ſpecies of idolatry eems to have been the moſt ancient, as this, and no other, is mentioned n the book of *Job*. Chap. xxxi. 26, 27, 28. *If I have beheld the ſun when t ſhined, or the moon walking in brightneſs; and my heart hath been ſecretly nticed, or my mouth hath kiſſed my hand:——this alſo were an iniquity to e puniſhed by the judge, for I ſhould have denied the God that is above.*

The worſhip of the heavenly bodies is ſuppoſed to have prevailed among the nations in the days of *Moſes*, Deut. iv. 19. xvii. 3. and was continued long after, 2 *Kings* xxi. 3, 5. xxiii. 4. *Jer.* xliv. 17, 19. The ſplendour and great utility of the heavenly bodies would naturally ſtrike the minds of mankind; and there would not then, any more than at any other time, be wanting artful men, who for their own advantage, and the honour of ſuperior wiſdom, would ſupply arguments for this idolatry, as the moſt effectual mean of ſecuring all the enjoyments of life, and inculcate them ſtrongly upon the minds of the weak and credulous, who have always been the moſt numerous part of mankind. *Maimonides*, the learned *Jew*, (as quoted by AINSWORTH upon *Gen.* iv. 26.) ſuppoſes the advocates of this corrupt worſhip argued after this manner. They

"They said——For as much as God hath created these heavenly bodies "to govern the world, and set them on high, and imparted honour unto "them, and they are Ministers that minister before him, it is meet that "men should praise, and glorify, and give them honour. For this is the "will of God, that we magnify and honour whomsoever he magnifieth "and honoureth; even as a king would have them honoured, that stand "before him; and this is honouring the king himself. When this thing "was come up into their hearts, they began to build temples to heavenly bodies, and to praise and glorify them with words, and to worship before them, that they might, in their misguided opinion, obtain "favour of the Creator." Thus you see, the first corrupters of Religion had principles and reasons; and perhaps as good as those who have in like manner corrupted Christianity, by introducing idolatry into it.

This corruption was not at first universal, it spread gradually. And therefore, though in *Abraham*'s days it had made a considerable progress yet even then, and for some time after, we meet with some eminent persons, who were not of *Abraham*'s family, that retained a just sense of God and the purity of his worship. For instance, *Melchizedeck*, king of *Salem* Gen. xiv. 18. who was (Heb. vii. 3.) *without father, without mother, without descent,* αγενεαλογητος, without a genealogy, *having neither beginning of days, nor end of life,* recorded in the history of the Patriarchs from *Noah* to *Abraham*. For (ver. 6.) *his descent*, or genealogy, *was not counted from them,* in the *Abrahamic* line; but for all that, he was a person of great eminence in religion. *Gen.* xiv. 18, &c. "For he was a worshipper of the true God, and a person of the most exemplary justice, "and sincere piety, remaining absolutely untainted, amidst the general "corruption of the country in which he lived; and who, for the better "promoting of true Religion, was himself a *priest*, as well as a *king*, and "performed the sacred offices of it among his own people. This great "man came forth to meet, and to congratulate *Abraham*, and provided "him a princely entertainment for himself and his men, for their refreshment, after they had engaged with, and defeated five kings. And "then, as priest, in which capacity he was superior to *Abraham*, (Heb. "vii. 7.) he solemnly gave *Abraham* his blessing, or wish of happiness; "putting up his hearty prayers to the great Creator and Governor of "the world, to confirm the blessing he had pronounced upon him; as "also his humble praises and thanksgivngs for the remarkable mercies "of his late victory. And *Abraham*, on the other side, paid his acknowledgment to the Almighty, by presenting the tenth of what he "had taken in the battle to *Melchizedeck* his priest, by whom he had "been so devoutly blessed." PYLE.

NOTE——*Melchizedeck*'s priesthood, as it was prior to that of the Jewish priests, so it was of a distinct and superior order, as the Apostle argues, *Heb.* vii. For long after the institution of the Jewish priesthood, the Lord with an oath declares, that the *Messiah* should be *a priest for ever, after the order* [in the Hebrew דברתי-על *secundum rem*, according to the affair, the case; which, as it relateth to a kind or sort of priesthood, is well translated δια ταξιν] *of Melchizedeck*, Psal. cx. 4. Of

what

t order was *Melchizedeck?* The Apoſtle directs us to underſtand names appellatively, or as denoting a character of moral excellence; *g of Righteouſneſs*, or a righteous king; and *King of Peace*, or bleſſ- or happineſs, as he wiſhed well to others, and endeavoured to make n happy, (*Heb.* vii. 2.) which is the higheſt character of worth and ellence any moral agent can ſuſtain. Thus he was *the Prieſt*, or ciated in the ſervice *of the moſt High God.* And thus the object of his ſthood, and conſequently his prieſthood itſelf, was of an eternal, un- ngeable, and univerſal nature, even righteouſneſs and goodneſs, not ited to time or family; for the Scripture gives no account of his h, death, or genealogy. We read of no predeceſſor or ſucceſſor in office, as in the Jewiſh prieſts. [Note——this argument is adapted *hominem*) to the Jews, who in this way, or by deſcent from *Aaron Levi*, judged of the validity of their prieſts.] But being of an uni- ſal, unchangeable nature, muſt ſubſiſt as long as there are any moral nts, that live in obedience to God.

Thus our Lord was made prieſt after the order of *Melchizedeck*, i. e. *after the law of a carnal* poſitive *commandment*, which confined the ce to a fleſhly, mortal deſcent, and employed in certain external rites l ceremonies; but *according to* that real *Power* which is productive *of leſs*, or eternal *life*, namely, true holineſs. *For*, verſe 17, *God declared, u art a prieſt for ever, after the order of the King of Righteouſneſs.* d chap. i. 8. 9. *Unto the Son he ſaith——Thy throne, O God, is ever- ing! A ſceptre of rectitude is the ſceptre of thy kingdom. Thou haſt loved hteouſneſs, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed* king and prieſt, *with the oil of gladneſs above thy fellows.* And ſtill rer to the caſe, chap. v. 8. *Though he were a ſon*, in the higheſt ſenſe, ore he came into the world, *yet was he diſciplined in obedience*, as if he l been a learner, *by the things which he ſuffered.* Verſe 9. *And being de perfect*, having exhibited a perfect character of all moral excellence, *became the author of eternal ſalvation to all them that obey him.* And it s on this account, ver. 10, that he was *called* and conſtituted *of God high prieſt after the order of the King of Righteouſneſs. For*, as the oſtle concludes his diſſertation upon this very ſubject, (*Heb.* vii. 26.) *h an high prieſt became us*, who is holy, *harmleſs, undefiled, ſeparate m ſinners, and made higher than the heavens*, or the Angels, in order raiſe us to their happineſs.

Melchizedeck was eminently religious. And probably *Abraham's* ghbours and confederates, *Mamre*, *Eſhcol*, and *Amer*, Gen. xiv. 13. re good and pious; for, though they were *Amorites*, it was about o years after this, before the ſins of that nation were full.

The book of *Job* gives the cleareſt and moſt extenſive view of the triarchal Religion. The reality of his perſon, the eminence of his aracter, his fortitude and patience in very great afflictions, his prece- g and ſubſequent felicity, are allowed by all; and it is generally ſup- ſed that he lived a generation or two before *Moſes*; and probably, the ok was wrote by himſelf, in time of his reſtored proſperity.

Some learned men indeed, as *Grotius*, *Codurcus*, *Le Clerc*, and others, etend that this noble performance was written about a thouſand years er the time in which *Job* lived; namely, in or near the time of the *Babyloniſh*

Babyloniſh captivity; alledging, "that frequent Chaldaiſms, as the plur
"ין for ים are to be found in it; that ſome paſſages are taken from t
"*Pſalms*, *Proverbs*, and *Eccleſiaſtes*; that there are more than a hu
"dred words, partly *Syriac*, partly *Arabic*, which are not to be fou
"in the other parts of Scripture; which are all ſigns that the auth
"lived in the later times, when many words, borrowed from the idio
"of the neighbouring nations, were admitted into the Hebrew.

It is one mark of the ſimplicity of very ancient times, that in the i
ventory of *Job*'s eſtate, no mention is made of money, but only of oxe
ſheep, camels, aſſes, ſervants. And *Grotius* himſelf owns, "That the
"is no mention in the book of *Job* of any law, or religious rites, b
"ſuch as were traditional, [*chap.* viii. 8, 9, 10. xv. 18, 19. xxii. 1
"16.] nor of any points of hiſtory, nor of any idolatrous practices, b
"ſuch as were of the more ancient times, before the Moſaic inſtitutio
"[*Chap.* xx. 4, 5, meaning *Adam.* xxii. 15, 16.] And that the lengt
"of *Job*'s life, extended to about 200 years, agrees alſo with the ſam
"times; that the country where it happened was *Arabia*, as appear
"not only from the names of places, *Uz*, *Teman*, *Shuhah*, but from th
"many *Arabic* words here uſed." And might not *Grotius* from hence
have fairly and ſtrongly concluded, that the writer was an *Arabian?* N
He ſaith, "it was written by ſome Hebrew." Why ſo? Becauſe *Arabi
Job*'s country, is called *the Eaſt*. Chap. i. 3. And it was uſual with th
Hebrews to call *Arabia* the Eaſt, as he has ſhewn upon *Mat.* ii. 1. B
the Arabian *Magi* themſelves, in the next verſe, call their own countr
Arabia, the Eaſt; and ſo might *Job*, or any other Arabian in *Job*'s time
The Eaſt-country was the common name of *Arabia*, as the Weſt-coun
try is the general name of one part of *England*. Many words uſed i
this book, are not to be found in other parts of Scripture. The reaſo
is, becauſe it is ſo ancient, that ſome words therein are grown obſolet
and their true meaning is hard to be recovered. It is therefore the mo
difficult, becauſe it is the moſt ancient book in the ſacred code. Had
been wrote in later times, the language would have been more intelli
gible.

It is no argument, that the author of this book took ſimilar or ſam
expreſſions from *David*'s or *Solomon*'s writings, [compare *Pſalm* cvii. 40
with *Job* xii. 21, 24.] becauſe it is more probable that *David* and *Solo
mon* borrowed ſuch expreſſions from the book of *Job*. [Compare *Jo
xxxix. 33. *Mat.* xxiv. 28.] *Schultens*, a very good judge, affirms, tha
the ſtyle of the book hath all the marks of a moſt venerable and remot
antiquity; and that the Chaldaiſms, as ſome call them, particularly th
plurals in ין, are true Hebrew and Arabic, and that of the moſt ancien
ſtamp. *Job* is honourably mentioned with *Noah* and *Daniel*, Ezek
xiv. 12——20. Hence it follows, (1.) That *Job* is no fictitious cha
racter, but a real perſon, as truly as *Noah* and *Daniel*. (2.) That h
was, as well as they, a perſon of diſtinguiſhed piety. (3.) That he wa
well known and celebrated as ſuch amongſt the *Jews*, to whom *Ezekiel*'
prophecy was directed. (4.) That he muſt either have been of the ſee
of *Iſrael*, or, like *Noah*, of the Patriarchal times; otherwiſe the *Jews*
ſeparated from, and raiſed in ſpiritual privileges above all other nations

would

ld never have proposed to themselves one of their Gentile, uncircum-
d neighbours, of whom they had a mean opinion, as an example of
greatest piety, nor have admitted his story into their Canon. If he
of the Patriarchal times (for an Israelite he could not be) he must
e been at the distance of about a thousand years before *Ezekiel*. Mere
tradition of such a person could not have subsisted through so long
ace of time. without appearing, at last, as uncertain or fabulous.
ere must, therefore, have been some history of *Job* in *Ezekiel*'s time;
other history but that which we now have, and which has always
a place in the Hebrew code, was ever heard of, or pretended. There-
this must be the history of *Job* in *Ezekiel*'s time; and which must
e been generally known, and read as true and authentic, and, con-
iently, must have been wrote near to the age in which the fact was
isfacted, and not in after-times, when its credibility would have been
atly diminished.

n short, should I aver, that this is the oldest and noblest book in the
rld, I should have the vote of all the best critics; and the very frame
cast of the book itself would justify the assertion.

CHAP. XXIII.

Of JOB's *Case and Character.*

THE Book of *Job* is the History of a real sufferer, *Job*; and the
Substance of a real conversation with his friends, about his suf-
ings, in a poetic dress. *Job* was a prince of the greatest eminence,
alth, and authority, among the people of the east; whose piety and
egrity equalled his temporal grandeur, *chap.* i. 1, 2, 3; of the
ctest religion and virtue; the patron of the injured poor and father-
; the scourge of injustice and oppression; highly honoured and
eemed by the good, revered and dreaded by the vicious and profane;
pters xxix. and xxxi. This man, so good, and so glorious, was, by
Divine Permission, and malice of the Devil, at once reduced to the
st indigent and deplorable circumstances, stript of all his substance,
eaved of all his children, seven sons and three daughters, and, soon
er, seized with a most noisome and painful disease, from head to foot;
ich rendered him the most shocking spectacle of sorrow and wretch-
ess. The country, so far as the fame of his grandeur and religion
l spread, would be full of his story, and of astonishment. The reli-
us would be inclined to conclude, that such signal and sudden cala-
ies could be no other than the judgments of God upon a man who,
der the mask of religion, had concealed a wicked and profligate life.
e wicked and profane would triumph in his sufferings, as a justifica-
n of their own bad principles and practices, and as a demonstration
of

of the insignificancy of the strictest regards to God and his worship *Chap.* xvi. 9, 10, 11. xvii. 6. His relations and acquaintance, struck with horror and aversion to such a despicable, vile, abandoned creature would not own him. His wife and family treated him with unkindness and neglect, *chap.* xix. 13——19. The basest of men broke in upon him like a legion of fiends, made his afflictions their merriment, treated him with all manner of indignities, calumnies, and slander; and even *spared not to spit in his face*; chap. xxx. 1—15. Scarce ever were the feelings of the human heart oppressed with such a complicated load of grief; scarce ever was a profession of religion so much exposed to censure, reproach, and insult.

And how did the good man bear all this? With heroic bravery; that is to say, with a patience as steady and uniform as human infirmity will admit. [*Patience is sincere adherence to God and duty, under all difficulties and discouragements*; and the ground of patience is *faith*, or *a full persuasion of the power, goodness, and wisdom of God.*] When his calamities, the loss of his numerous herds, flocks, and servants, and of his dearest children, partly by the hands of violence, partly by lightning and storm; when these calamities rushed upon him like an inundation, though he felt all the pangs of the most grievous affliction, and used such expressions of his doleful case, as were customary at that time; [*Chap.* i. 20.—— *rent his mantle, shaved his head, fell down upon the ground.* Chap. ii. 8, 12. *Sprinkled dust upon their heads*; See 1 *Sam.* iv. 12. 2 *Sam.* xiii. 19. *Josh.* vii. 6. *Ezek.* xxvii. 30. *Iliad* xviii. 22.] yet he behaved like a wise and good man, prostrating himself upon the ground in a humble sense of his own unworthiness, and a patient submission to the Will of God, composing his mind into a calm and quiet adoration of his supreme Dominion and unblemished Justice, *chap.* i. 20, 21. "I came," saith he, "by the "Divine Will into the world, a naked helpless creature; and by the "same will I must shortly return to the dust. I am bereaved of my "most valuable and dearest temporal enjoyments, but by the permission "of a wise and righteous God. His own he gave; his own, for wise "ends, he hath taken away. I acquiesce in his Sovereign Dispofals, "and adore the inconteftable purity and righteousness of his dealings "with me." O brave Soul! O happy Man, who could keep up good thoughts of God, and communion with him, under the sharpest strokes of his rod!

When, covered over with painful boils, in the place and posture of an humble penitent, he was probably pouring out his submissions and supplications to Heaven, his wife spared not to reproach him with his preposterous godliness. *Chap.* ii. 9, 10. *Dost thou still retain thine integrity by blessing God, and dying?* q. d. "Will you bless God when he is destroy-"ing you? Will you call upon him, and believe he is good, when he "hath ruined your estate and family, and, in spite of all your humble "submissions, is slaughtering your body, and within a stroke of your "life?" But *Job* returned no other than a mild answer, as became a good man, and affectionate husband. "You speak not like yourself," said he, "but as a woman void of understanding. Is it fit God should "always smile upon sinful creatures? Shall we say, he is not just when "he brings us into afflictions? We receive what pleaseth us with joy,

"and

and it is but reasonable that we receive what is ungrateful with a calm resignation; seeing both come from the same Wise and Sovereign Disposer of all things." Still *Job* is patient, and, under every trial, heres to God and duty.

The composure and steadiness of his mind was more severely tried by three friends, *Eliphaz*, *Bildad*, and *Zophar*, men of the same rank, d of like good sense and piety, who dwelt in some of the adjacent vinces, and in whose familiarity he had probably been long happy. he report of his sufferings, of the ruin of his character, and the wound reby given to religion, having reached their ears, they agreed, with sincere intention, to join their endeavours in administering the only vice and consolation they apprehended his case would admit. For, as e suspicions were very strong, and his calamities carried evident marks Divine Inflictions, they had the same opinion of them with the rest the world, and believed they were the just judgments of God upon a pocrite; and therefore were determined, by all means, to fix a sense guilt upon his conscience, in order to bring him to true repentance, d so to a solid interest in the Divine Favour and blessing. But when ey were come, and had found their late flourishing, honourable, and ghly-esteemed friend, reduced to the most loathsome and miserable etch, that was sitting in the ashes, they were astonished beyond pression; and being confirmed in their evil suspicions, though they sat th him on the ground, yet, as their bad opinion of him would not ow them to say any thing comfortable and encouraging, they chose to nothing at all for seven or several days together, *chap.* ii. 12. The ht of his old acquaintance, and their unfavourable manner of conlence, raised his passion of sorrow to such a pitch, that it burst out into orrent of the most bitter reflections upon his birth-day; wishing it ere struck out of the number of days, or rendered as odious and testable to all others, as it was to himself.

Upon this, *Eliphaz*, probably the oldest and most honourable of the ree, addressed himself to *Job*, and, in the softest manner, opened eir sense of his case; namely, that, in their apprehensions, he had en very defective in the character to which he had pretended; that eat sufferings must be the punishment of great sins; and that they could commend to him no other method of regaining his former peace and osperity, but repentance, and seeking unto God for pardon. In short, ey soon declared plainly, that they judged he had been a very wicked an, and that his calamities were an evident indication of the wrath of od against him as such. This *Job* flatly denied; and this is the atter in dispute between him and his friends: which dispute, as is ual in such cases, was carried on with a growing eagerness and heat on th sides; and on both sides might occasion some expressions too strong d exaggerating.

His friends argue from experience, and what they had observed to be e usual method of Divine Providence. They had seen many instances wicked men, or of those who had passed for such, remarkably nished; and hence they formed to themselves a general maxim, that here they saw great wretchedness and sufferings, there must be crimes proportionably great. To this *Job* also opposes observation and experience;

rience; and shews, that the rule of judging they had formed to themselves, was by no means right, or without exception; that good men were sometimes afflicted, and the wicked flourishing and happy; and that for the most part, things were dealt out here promiscuously; that this was more especially observable in times of war and pestilence, and such other sweeping calamities where the good and bad fall undistinguished *Chap.* ix. 22, 23. To all which he adds, that it was a very heavy aggravation of his misery, to hear his friends, so well acquainted with him men of sense and distinction, charge him with crimes which his soul abhorred, and of which God, who had afflicted him, knew that he was innocent. To him he would appeal, and still adhere in life and death though he did not know why he had dealt so severely with him. And so strongly did *Job* assert the integrity of his religion and virtue, (*chapters* xxix. and xxxi.) that his friends, though perhaps not convinced, were however put to silence (*chap.* xxxii. 1).

Upon this, *Elihu*, a young man of good understanding, who probably, with others, was a bystander and witness to this debate (*chap.* xxxii. 15.) acts as moderator between *Job* and his friends, and censures both very freely and judiciously; only he charges *Job* with no crime as the cause of his afflictions, but thinks he had not managed the dispute about them with so much calmness and submission to God as became his piety.

Finally, the Lord answered *Job* out of the *whirlwind* (the Septuagint add, *and clouds*), a token of the Divine Presence. So *Ezekiel*'s visions were introduced, *Ezek.* i. 4. *And I looked, and behold, a whirlwind came out of the North, a great cloud and a fire.* Perhaps *Elihu* saw this token of the Divine Presence approaching. *Job.* xxxvii. 22, *&c. Fair weather* [זהב *gold*, splendor, the splendor of the Divine Presence. See *Schultens* in loc.] *cometh* [יאתה will come, or is coming, speedily] *out of the North; with God is terrible Majesty.* The speech of Deity, (*chap.* xxxviii. xxxix. xl. xli.) most inimitably grand and sublime, representing the vast extent of the Divine Wisdom and power in the works of creation, which *Job* and his friends had well studied, and from which they knew how to deduce proper conclusions, shews, 1. That all things in the sky, the air, the earth, the sea, are produced and disposed in a manner far beyond the reach of human wisdom and power. Consequently 2. That man is not qualified to dispose of himself, or of any other being. That God may have wise and good reasons for his ways and works, and dealings with us, which we cannot comprehend; and therefore it is our duty, in all cases, to acquiesce and submit. 3. That he who has given various natures and instincts to animals, can give being and life, when and where, and in what degree he pleases. 4. That he is present to, cares for, sustains and directs every living thing; and therefore that we ought to trust in him for a happy issue out of any of his inflictions. 5. That the wisest of men should be very cautious and modest in censuring the ways of Providence.

Chap. xlii. Job humbleth himself before God, sacrificeth for his friends; his family is restored, his estate is doubled.

RULES to be obſerved in expounding the Book of *Job*.

I. He that would rightly explain this book muſt, as much as he can, imagine himſelf in the ſame afflicted condition.

II. Every daring thought, or ardent expreſſion, which occurs in the ſpeeches of this afflicted and exaſperated man, is not to be vindicated; yet, as he was a great man, and a prince, he may be allowed to uſe bold and animated language.

III. We ſhall certainly judge amiſs, if we think every thing wrong, which will not ſuit with the politeneſs of our manners. Allowance muſt be made for the ſimplicity of thoſe times.

IV. In judging of *Job*'s character, we muſt ſet the noble ſtrains of his piety againſt the unguarded expreſſions of his ſorrow.

V. It is not his innocence, ſtrictly ſpeaking, which *Job* inſiſts on, but his ſincerity. *Chap.* vii. 20, 21.

VI. Except their hard cenſures of *Job*, his friends ſpeak well and religiouſly.

VII. His friends encouraged *Job* to hope for a temporal deliverance; (*chap.* v. 18, *&c.* vii. 20, *&c.* xi. 14, *&c.*) but *Job* deſpaired of it, and expected his bodily diſorder would terminate in death, (*chap.* vi. 11, 12. vii. 6, 7, 8, 21. xvii. 1, 13, 14, 15. xix. 10. Though, in the increaſing heat of the diſpute, they ſeem to drop this ſentiment, in their following anſwers, as if they ſuppoſed *Job* to be too bad to hope for any favour from God.) He hoped, however, that his character would be cleared in the day of judgment: though he was greatly concerned that it could not be cleared before; that after a life led in the moſt conſpicuous virtues, his reputation, in the opinion of his neareſt friends, would ſet under a black cloud, and, with regard to the ignorant and profane, leave an odious reproach upon a profeſſion of religion. This touched him to the heart; exaſperated all his ſufferings, and made him often wiſh, that God would bring him to his trial here, in this life; that his integrity might be vindicated, and all, friends and enemies, might underſtand the true end or deſign of God in his ſufferings; and the honour of religion might be ſecured. *Chap.* x. ii. 2, 3. *Is it good unto thee, that thou ſhouldſt—ſhine upon the counſel of the wicked?* who from my caſe take occaſion to reproach and vilify true religion, and to confirm themſelves in their wicked and idolatrous practices. *Chap.* viii. 20, 21, 22. xi. 17—20, xvi. 9—11.

VIII. He could only affirm his integrity, but could give no ſpecial ſatisfactory reaſon, why God ſhould afflict him in a manner ſo very extraordinary, and beyond all preceding caſes that were ever known in the world. This very much perplexed and embarraſſed his mind, and laid him under a great diſadvantage in the diſpute. And, for one thing, it is on this account that he is ſo earneſt to come to a conference with God, to know his mind and meaning. *Chap.* x. 2. *Shew me wherefore thou contendeſt with me.* See Bp. PATRICK's Paraphraſe upon the place, from ver. 2d to the 8th. He knew very well he could not abſolutely juſtify himſelf before God, *chap.* ix. 2, 3, *&c. ver.* 17. *For he breaks me*

me with a tempest, he multiplieth my wounds without a cause, or without any apparent reason. *Chap.* vii. 12, 20. The whole xxiiid chapter relates to this point; in which he wishes he could come to the dwelling-place of God, (*ver.* 3.) and spread his case before him, and argue about it at large, (*ver.* 4.) for he had turned his thoughts every way, and could make nothing of it, (*ver.* 8, 9.) only he was sure God knew he was an upright man, (*ver.* 10, 11, 12.) *But*, (*ver.* 13.) *he is in one* באחד or in unity, supreme above all others, absolutely entire, keeping his mind and designs to himself; *and none can turn*, or oblige him to alter his resolution. All that we can say is, that he doth whatever is agreeable to his own wisdom. For (*ver.* 14.) what he hath resolved to inflict upon me he hath accomplished; and many such things he doth, of which he will not give us the reason. To the same purpose understand *chap.* xxvii. 2, 3, 4, 14. and *chap.* xxviii. 2. *He hath taken away my judgment*, i. e. the rule by which I might judge of the reason of my afflictions. This point, in reference to God, *Elihu* tells him (*chap.* xxxiii. 13.) he had urged to no purpose, *seeing he gives no account of his matters*, or will not reveal to us the secrets of his Providence.

IX. In such a noble performance, if any thing seems to be said not in consistency, or not in character, we should rather suspect our own judgment, than the good sense of the Author. The fault is not in the book, but in our understanding.

X. That sense which best agrees with the subject, or the point in hand, or which stands in the best connexion with the context, should always be judged the best sense.

CRITICISMS.

Chap. i. 5. To bless a person is a form of valediction, 2 *Sam.* xix. 39. So here, *My sons have* have taken leave of *God*. And so 1 Kings, xxi. 13. *Naboth* hath bid farewell to *God and the King*, or hath treated them with contempt.

Chap. iii. 25, 26. *The thing that I greatly feared is come upon me*, &c. This alludes to the loss of his children, for whom he was very much concerned, *chap.* i. 5. But *chap.* xxix. 18. and xxx. 26. relate to his circumstances in general.

Chap. xiii. 12. *Your remembrances* זכרוניכם *your* [quoting of] *memorable sayings are like ashes*, or dirt; *your bodies* גביכם *your heaps*, eminencies, your strongest arguments, *to heaps of clay*, soon washed away.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXIV.

The Doctrines of the PATRIARCHAL AGE.

THE inſtructions particularly deſigned to be given in the Book of *Job*, might not be ſo well underſtood in that age of the world; namely, that great ſufferings are not always an argument of great ſins; but that very good men may be very much afflicted in this world; that therefore we ſhould not cenſure any under calamities, be the hand of God ever ſo apparent, unleſs the crimes be likewiſe certain and apparent. That we ought not to complain of God in any condition, as if he neglected us, or dealt hardly with us, but rather meekly ſubmit to his Bleſſed Will; who never doth any thing without reaſon, though we cannot always comprehend it; adoring and revering the unſearchable depths of his Wiſe Counſel, and believing that all at laſt will turn out to our advantage, if like his ſervant *Job* we perſevere in faith, hope, and patience. This was *Job*'s real character, though not without errors. No error can be diſcerned in his behaviour, but what the uncharitable cenſures of his friends provoked him to. Thus he was put upon too frequent and too ſtrong juſtifications of himſelf, being withal extremely perplexed to give a plain and ſatisfactory account why God afflicted him ſo ſeverely.

God, in the iſſue, ſatisfied him, that he had juſt and weighty reaſons; and, in particular, by doubling his proſperity, that he deſigned to make him a pattern of patience and reward. *James* v. 11. *Behold, we account them happy who endure* patiently the greateſt ſufferings. *Ye have heard of the* wonderful *patience of Job, and have ſeen*, in his caſe, *the* happy *end* to which *the Lord* brought his calamities. Whence we may learn, that under the ſevereſt viſitations, the Lord is very compaſſionate and merciful to the ſincere and upright, and will amply recompenſe them in a future world.

Thus the great point in religion, before dark and doubtful, relating to the Providence of God, and the ſufferings of good men, is cleared up with ſuch evidence, as can no where elſe be found but in the goſpel of *Jeſus Chriſt*.

Though this point might not be ſo well underſtood, before it was thus illuſtrated, yet there are ſeveral other important articles of religion, of which *Job* and his friends, and doubtleſs many others, had very juſt and clear conceptions: as the being and perfections of God; that we can receive neither good nor evil but from him, the Author of our being, and Diſpoſer of all events; that he ſees and orders all things in heaven and earth; that there can be no iniquity with him; that he is the Friend and Patron of virtue, and hates, and will puniſh vice and wickedneſs; nevertheleſs, that he is merciful and gracious, and will certainly pardon and bleſs thoſe who ſincerely repent of their ſins, and return unto him: that he is to be ſupremely reverenced and worſhipped, as the ſole Sovereign of the univerſe, by prayers and ſacrifices, by purity and integrity

heart, by juſtice in all our dealings, by all acts of charity, goodneſs and benevolence to others, particularly to the helpleſs and indigent; by temperance and ſobriety, curbing irregular deſires and appetites: that men ſhould not be elated and puffed up by large poſſeſſions, nor put their truſt in riches, *chap.* xxxi. 24, 25; that they ſhould abhor idolatry, *ver.* 26, 27, 28; that they ſhould not wiſh evil to an enemy, nor rejoice in his misfortunes, *ver.* 29, 30, much leſs think of murdering him; that they ſhould abſtain from adultery and fornication, *ver.* 1, 2, 3, 9, 10, 11; from theft, rapine, and deceit, *ver.* 5, 6, 7. For the puniſhment of which crimes he mentions judges in his days, (ver. 11, 28.) and was himſelf one of the chief, chap. xxix. 7, 9, &c.

Theſe, and ſuch like principles of natural religion, are allowed both by *Job* and his friends, and therefore were the religion of the Patriarchs, as indeed they are the principles of true and acceptable religion in all ages and parts of the world.

Further; the religious in that, and the preceding, as well as ſubſequent ages, I am perſuaded, entertained the faith and hope of a future ſtate. This hath been the popular belief of all nations from time immemorial; and it is ſcarce credible, in the nature of the thing, that the greateſt happineſs of this life, which might at any uncertain time, and at length would infallibly and totally be demoliſhed by death, ſhould ever become a ſolid principle of religion, conſidered as the ſole reward of piety and virtue.

However it appears, that *Job* expected a future world, for he had hope with regard to his condition, but not in this world; therefore, his hope muſt be in a future ſtate. Chap. xiii. 15. 16. הן יקטלני לא איחל *Lo*, or certainly, *he will ſlay me: I will not hope*, non eſt quod ſperem, I have no ground to hope, that I ſhall ſurvive my ſufferings, *yet will I maintain* the integrity of *my own ways before him. And even this ſhall be for ſalvation to me*; [where but in a future world?] *for a hypocrite ſhall not come before him*; ſhall not have confidence to preſent himſelf before his tribunal. Chap. xxiii. 10. *But he knows the way that I take; when he has tried me, I ſhall come forth as gold.* As *Job* abſolutely deſpairs of any temporal deliverance, this muſt neceſſarily be underſtood of the hope he entertained of having his innocence cleared in the day of judgment.

He had, moreover, a notion of the reſurrection. Chap. xiv. 7. *For there is hope of a tree, if it is cut down, that it will ſprout again, and that the tender branch thereof will not ceaſe.* Ver. 8. *Though the root thereof wax old in the earth, and the ſtock thereof die in the ground*, ver. 9. *yet through the ſcent of water it will bud, and bring forth boughs like a* new *plant.* Ver. 10. *And ſhall man die, and totally waſte away? And ſhall man give up the ghoſt, and where is he?* Or be no more for ever? Ver. 11. *As the waters fail from the ſea*, as the ſea ebbs and flows again, *and the river*, or brook in the dry ſandy country of *Arabia*, *decays, and drieth up*, in ſummer, but is made a brook again by the rains and ſnows of winter; ver. 12. *So man lieth down, and riſeth not, till the heavens be no more; they ſhall not awake, nor be raiſed out of their ſleep*, to return to the affairs and poſſeſſions of this world. Ver. 13. And *Oh that thou*, O God,

od, *wouldſt hide me in the grave*, in that ſtate of ſleep and inſenſibility, *t thou wouldſt keep me ſecret*, in that ſilent retirement, *until thy wrath paſt*; *that thou wouldſt appoint me a ſet time, and remember me* to reſtore to a new and better life! Ver. 14. *If a man die, ſhall he live again?* ſhall a man live again, after he is dead? Then I will patiently wait the days of the time thou ſhall be pleaſed to appoint, till my happy novation ſhall come. Ver. 15. *Thou ſhalt call, and I will* joyfully *anſwer thee*; *thou wilt have a longing deſire to* reſtore *the work of thy hands.* Ver. 16. *Though now*, at preſent, *thou numbereſt my ſteps*, &c.

Chap. xix. 23. Obſerve the ſolemn introduction; *Oh, that my words*, which I am going to ſpeak, *were now written! Oh, that they were printed a book!* Ver. 24. *That they were graven with an iron pen and lead, in rock* [my grave-ſtone, SCHULTENS], *for ever!* This is too grand temporal deliverance. Why ſhould that be recorded upon a rock, as laſting monument to all mankind? But it very well ſuits the noble ſublime hope of a reſurrection and future judgment, worthy of iverſal attention. Ver. 25. *For I know*, or am well aſſured, *that my Vindicator*, [the Vindicator of my innocence is] *living*, *and that at laſt over the duſt*, [the dead, that hath been reduced to duſt,] *he ſhall ſe*, [to execute judgment, *Job* xxxi. 13, 14, *Pſal.* lxxiv. 22. lxxxii.] Verſe 26. *And* though *after my ſkin they ſhall deſtroy this*, [or this dy ſhall be deſtroyed,] *yet from my* reſtored *fleſh I ſhall with pleaſure God.* [Vide R. חזה] verſe 27. *Whom I ſhall ſee for myſelf*, [to do me tice, as chap. v. 27.—*for thy good* [for thyſelf] *and mine eyes ſhall behold*; *but* זר *a ſtranger* to goodneſs and juſtice ſhall *not* behold him in e ſame manner. *My reins are conſumed in my boſom* [in ardent expectaon of this glorious event. *N. B.* כלה *ſequente* עין, נפש *vel* חח derium, ingens, flagrans et conſumens ſignificat; videſis Pſalms lxxxiv. cxix. 82, 123. cxliii. 7. Sic quoque de כליות renes, ſtatuendum.] obſerve—if after his ſkin, his body alſo was deſtroyed, how could he tlive this deſtruction, ſo as to be a man proſperous and happy again this world? Had this been his fixed belief, his frequent wiſhing for ath would be utterly unaccountable, and his tragical complaints ridilous, and his deſpair of health and happineſs in this world a contraction.

If wicked men, though ſometimes in great wretchedneſs, (chap. xxi. , &c.] are alſo ſometimes proſperous and powerful, *verſe* 7, &c. the per inference is, *verſe* 30. *That the wicked are reſerved unto the day of ſtruction*, and that *they ſhall be brought forth to the day of wrath*; not in s world, for that would have cut the neck of *Job*'s argument at once, d have fallen in directly with that of his friends. Chap. xxxi. 3.

Chap. xxvii. 8. *For what is the hope of an hypocrite*, in the future ſtate, *ugh he hath gained much* in this world; *when God takes away his ſoul* at ath? This ſuppoſeth a hope after death.—Again, chap. xxxi. 13, 14. *hat then ſhall I do when God riſeth up* to judgment? Not in this world, here his ſufferings were as great as could be, and where he did not exct they would be abated.—Laſtly, his *friends had not ſpoken of God the ing that was right*, as *Job* had done, chap. xlii. 7, 8. But ſetting

aſide a future ſtate, the friends would have ſpoke more worthily of God, by vindicating his Providence in the exact diſtribution of good and evil in this life; and *Job*, who aſſerted the contrary, would have miſrepreſented his dealings with mankind.

The Patriarchs before and after *Job*, and the *Iſraelites* before *Chriſt came*, had a notion of a future ſtate.—By ſacrifices was plainly ſhewn, that a way was open to the Divine Favour and Acceptance; and the favour of God imports happineſs, which to *Abel*, who was for that very reaſon, becauſe he was accepted of God, unjuſtly ſlain, could be only in a future ſtate. *Heb.* xi. 4. Και δι' αυτης αποθανων *and dying on account of that* his faith *he yet ſpeaketh* an inviſible future ſtate of reward.—The tranſlation of *Enoch* and *Elijah*, in two diſtant ages, were well-known demonſtrations of a future ſtate of reward and glory.—They were certainly acquainted with God and Angels, and heaven where both reſided. *Gen.* xxii. 11. And the connexion between this world and heaven, by the miniſtry of Angels, was clearly repreſented to *Jacob*. Geneſis xxviii. 12. They muſt, therefore, have a notion of another and better world.

The promiſe to *Abraham*, Geneſis xvii. 7. *I will be a God unto thee*, we ſhall find, is the ſame with the goſpel promiſe, and therefore muſt include the gift of eternal life. And as that promiſe was ſure to *Abraham*, *Iſaac*, and *Jacob*, when they were dead, (*Exodus* iii. 6.) our Lord rightly infers, that they would riſe again. (*Luke* xx. 37, 38.) *For* God *is not a God of the dead*, who cannot, as ſuch, be benefited by him, *but of the living*; for though they are dead, *they all live unto him*, or with reſpect of him, as he will raiſe them all to life again.—And the Patriarchs thus underſtood this promiſe; for when they conſidered and repreſented their life in this world as a pilgrimage, *Geneſis* xlvii. 9. or a ſtate of ſojourning or travelling, they plainly intimated that they were ſeeking πατριδα, their Father's country, *i. e.* the heavenly country or city. *Heb.* xi. 13—16. Had the proſpects of *Moſes* been confined to this world, doubtleſs he would have preferred the pleaſures and honours of *Pharaoh*'s court; but by refuſing them, and chooſing rather to ſuffer with the people of God, he plainly indicated, that *he had reſpect to the* future *recompenſe of reward*. Heb. xi. 24, 25, 26.

It is certain the *Jews*, even during their peculiarity, were under the *Abrahamic*, or Goſpel covenant, promiſing the pardon of ſin, and eternal life, as well as under the law, or *Sinai* covenant. *Deut.* xxix. 12, 13. And ſurely, if they were admitted to a covenant of life and immortality, they could not be ignorant of a future ſtate. Nor can it be judged at all improbable, that *Moſes* propounds eternal life to them in ſuch paſſages as this, *Deut.* xxx. 6. *The Lord thy God will circumciſe thy heart, and the heart of thy ſeed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy ſoul, that thou mayſt live.* This our Lord underſtood of eternal life. *Luke* x. 25, &c. When one aſked him, *What ſhall I do to inherit eternal life?* he ſent him to the law of *Moſes*; and when the enquirer readily quoted the rule of life given by *Moſes*, our Lord replied, *Thou haſt anſwered well, this do, and thou ſhalt live*, meaning eternally. Which leads us to underſtand *Moſes* in the ſame ſenſe, when he propoſes life as the reward of their ſincere religion, virtue, and goodneſs. *Deut.* xxx. 15, 19, 20.

19, 20. *Lev.* xviii. 5. compared with *Romans* x. 5. *Gal.* iii. 10, 11, 12. Indeed life and prosperity in the land of *Canaan*, is intermixed with such promises. This is to be considered as addressed to them in a national capacity, and with respect to the covenant of peculiarity. [Note—— *Life* is put for eternal life, *John* vi. 47, 48, 52, 53, 58.] ראשית is the beginning, or former part; אחרית properly denotes, what comes after, the after part, time, or state. Thus *Job*'s time, after his afflictions were over, is called his *ahharith*, chap. xlii. 12. So is a man's posterity, or those that come after him in being. *Amos* iv. 2.

Sometimes it signifies the happy consequence, or sequel of a course of action, *Proverbs* xxiv. 14, 20; frequently after-days, or times in this world; but is never used more properly than to denote a future state after death. *Num.* xxiii. 10. *Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my* ahharith, *my after* or future *state, be like his.* Psalm lxxiii. 3—18. The wicked lived in prosperity, and died an easy death. *There are no bands in their death*, verse 4. I envied them, saith *David*, verse 17, *until I went into the sanctuary* of God; *then understood I their* ahharith, *future state*, after death. *Surely thou hast set them in slippery places; thou hast cast them down into* eternal *destruction*, &c. Verse 20. *As a dream after one is awake; so, O Lord, when thou awakest* [בעיר in awaking *them*, or when they are awakened] *thou wilt despise*, [debase, pour contempt upon, *Daniel* xii. 2.] *their image* [צלמם their vain, shadowy, unsubstantial condition.] Verse 23. *Nevertheless I am continually with thee*, [the object of thy special care.] Verse 24—27. *Thou shalt guide me by thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory*, &c. *Proverbs* xxiii. 17, 18. *Surely there is an end*, ahharith, an after-state. *Jer.* xvii. 11. *As the bird Kore hatcheth eggs, which she did not lay, so he that getteth riches, and not by right, shall leave them in the midst of his days, and at his end* [ובאחריתו in his after—or future-state,] *shall be* נבל *a fool*, vile, contemptible. Verse 13.—— They that depart from me *shall be written in the earth*, not registered in heaven, in the book of life. *Deut.* xxxii. 29.——their latter end, their after——or future-state. *Psalm* xxxvii. 37, 38.——*the end*, ahharith, *of that man is peace*, happiness. *But the transgressors shall be utterly destroyed*, [where but in the future world?] *the end*, ahharith, *of the wicked shall be cut off.* Deut. xiv. 1, 2. *Ye are the children of the Lord your God*; (of an immortal Father) *ye shall not cut yourselves, nor make any baldness between your eyes for the dead.* They must not mourn as those that had no hope, 1 *Thes.* iv. 13. Adoption includes the redemption of the body. *Romans* viii. 23.——*Isaiah* xxvi. 19. *Thy dead* men *shall live, with my dead body shall they arise: awake, and sing, ye that dwell in the dust; for thy dew is as the dew of herbs*, which makes herbs to spring and grow up. *But the earth shall cast out the* wicked *dead*, the rephaim, as abortives.

See Psalms xv. xvi. 9, &c. xvii. 15.——*when I awake* out of death. *Daniel* xii. 2. *Psalms* xxiii. 6. xxiv. 3, 4, 5. *Eccl.* iii. 16, 17. xii. 13. *Isaiah* xxv. 8. li. 6.

These instances may satisfy, that, although life and immortality are brought into the fullest light by the Gospel, a future state was not unknown from the beginning to the coming of *Christ*. We may therefore take it for a good rule, that the words *life* and *salvation*, in the Old

Teſtament, may be underſtood of a *future life and ſalvation*, when the context will admit of ſuch an interpretation.

We have found, that in the Patriarchal Age, among the nations, before the Jewiſh peculiarity, there were perſons eminent for religion and virtue, who worſhipped the living God, and enjoyed extraordinary communications from him; but that many were of a different character, wicked and ungodly men; and that idolatry, captivating the minds of the ignorant, weak, and vicious, ſpread ſo faſt, that it threatened the total extinction of good morals, and of the knowledge and pure worſhip of God. How the Father of mankind counteracted this new inſtance of degeneracy we ſhall ſee, when we have ſettled the Scripture-Chronology, and conſidered the judgment of God upon *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*.

CHAP. XXV.

The SCRIPTURE-CHRONOLOGY *from the* DELUGE *to the* EXODUS. *The Wickedneſs and Ruin of* SODOM, *&c. 857 Years.*

Year before Chriſt.	Year of the World.	Year of *Shem*'s Age.	Proofs.	Names of the Patriarchs, and their Ages, when they had Sons.	Years.	
2346	1658	100	Gen. xi. 10.	Shem, after the Flood	2	and begat
			——— 12.	Arphaxad lived	35	and begat
			——— 14.	Salah lived	30	and begat
			——— 16.	Heber lived	34	and begat
			——— 18.	Peleg lived	30	and begat
			——— 20.	Reu lived	32	and begat
			——— 22.	Serug lived	30	and begat
			——— 24.	Nahor lived	29	and begat
				Terah lived	130 *	and begat
1921	2083	525	——— xii. 4.	Abraham	75	when the Promiſe was made.
		550	——— xxi. 5.	After that	25	and begat
			——— xxv. 26.	Iſaac lived	60 †	and begat
1706	2298		——— xlvii. 9.	Jacob aged	130	when he removed to *Egypt*.
1491	2513			Iſraelites continued there	215	

* *GEN.* xi. 26. it is ſaid, *Terah* lived 70 years, and begat *Abram*, *Nahor*, and *Haran*. But *Terah* was 205 years old when he died in *Haran*, Gen. xi. 32. After *Terah*'s death, *Abram* left *Haran*; and then was he 75 years old, *Gen.* xii. 4. which being ſubtracted from 205, *Terah*'s age, gives 130, the year of *Terah* when *Abram* was born.

† Add

† Add *Isaac*'s age (60) when *Jacob* was born, to the years from the eluge, and you will have 512, the year after the Deluge when *Jacob* as born. *Shem* was 98 years old at the Deluge, and lived 600 years, *n.* xi. 10, 11. Take 98 from 600, and there remains 502, the years *em* lived after the Deluge; which, deducted from 512, the year after e Deluge, in which *Jacob* was born, leaves ten years, the time between *em*'s death and *Jacob*'s birth. Hence it follows, that *Isaac* lived with *em* 50, and that *Abram* lived with *Shem* 150 years. *Isaac* also, who ed 180 years, (*Gen.* xxxv. 28.) lived 120 with *Jacob*, i. e. till within n years of *Jacob*'s going down into *Egypt*. And as *Shem* lived with *lethuselah* 98, and *Methuselah* with *Adam* 240, three persons, *Methuselah*, *em*, and *Isaac*, might bring down the account of things from *Adam* l within ten years of the going down of the *Israelites into Egypt*. om the Deluge to the Promise was 427 years.

From the Promise to the time when *Jacob* and his family went down to *Egypt* was 215 years. And from the Promise to the time when the ildren of *Israel* came out of *Egypt* was 430 years. Compare *Exod.* i. 41. with *Gal.* iii. 17. Therefore the time of their continuance in *ypt* must be 215 years.

Joseph was 30 years of age when preferred by *Pharoah*, Gen. xli. . After that there were seven years of plenty, and two of famine *en.* xlv. 11.) before *Jacob* came down into *Egypt*. *Joseph*, therefore, as then 39 years of age: after that he lived 71 years, for he lived in 110 years, *Gen.* l. 22, 26. Take 71 out of 215, and there remains 4, the time the *Israelites* remained slaves in *Egypt* after *Joseph*'s death. *od.* i. 8.

Before we come to the promise made to *Abraham*, which was the undation-stone of the grand scheme to preserve religion and morals in e world, we must turn our thoughts a while to a particular dispensa- n which God inflicted upon four cities, *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*, *Admah* d *Zeboim*, (Gen. xiv. 2. Deut. xxix. 23.) that stood in a very exten- e, fruitful, and pleasant vale, along the sides of the river *Jordan*. Gen. i. 10. So far had idolatry, and the immorality which usually attends infected the world, that these four populous cities, and *Zoar*, which not far from them, (*Gen.* xiv. 2. xix. 20.) were become excessively bauched and wicked, indulging to that vilest sort of lewdness which commonly called Sodomy, *going after strange flesh*, (Jude 7.) *the men rning in their lust one towards another, men with men working that which unseemly.* Rom. i. 27.

Therefore God purposed to punish them with an exemplary and total truction. *Abraham*, in the benevolence of his soul, interceded for ir preservation. *Gen.* xviii. 23. And such is the mercy of God, so eat his regard to virtuous characters, and so ready for their sakes to low blessings, even upon the unworthy, that he would have spared m, if but ten truly sober and virtuous persons could have been found in those five cities; but they were universally and irreclaimably corrupt. herefore, sparing *Zoar* for *Lot*'s sake, (*Gen.* xix. 20, 21.) he destroyed other four cities, with all their inhabitants, by pouring upon them most dreadful storm of fire and brimstone from heaven; and also, obably, by a terrible earthquake, that broke up the very soil of the earth,

earth, and by an irruption of bituminous waters, which turned the whol vale into one heavy, fetid, and unwholsome lake, called the *dead*, or *sa sea*, about 30 miles long, and 10 miles broad, *Gen.* xix. 24, 25, whic remains unto this day.

This dreadful instance of Divine Vengeance, through the mercy God, removed the bad examples of those daring sinners, had a natur fitness to awaken and reform the surviving impious, and was very pro perly intended to remain a perpetual monument of the wrath of Go upon the wickedness of mankind. 2 *Pet.* ii. 6. *Jude*, ver. 7. *Sufferin the vengeance of eternal fire.* Note——the fire was *eternal*, as it totall and for ever destroyed those cities never to be built again. God thu *revealed his* future *wrath from heaven against all ungodliness and unright ousness of men.* And though there be no present appearances of it, w should not therefore be secure. For, as our Lord observes, *Luke* xvi 28. The *Sodomites did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they plante they builded*, thoughtless and secure; *but the same day that Lot went o of Sodom, it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them al Even thus shall it be in the day that the Son of Man is revealed.*

Gen. xix. 24. *The* LORD *rained fire and brimstone from the* LORD *in hea ven.* This is an Hebraism, where the noun itself is put instead of th personal pronoun.

Gen. xix. 26. *But his wife looked back from behind him, and she became pillar of salt.* Note—The sulphureous storm did not begin to fall upo *Sodom* till *Lot* was safely arrived at *Zoar*, Gen. xix. 22. But his wif looked back before he reached *Zoar*; for she *looked back from behind him* as he was going to *Zoar*. Therefore, when she looked back, *Sodom* and the fine country about it, appeared in the same pleasant and seren state as ever. Consequently, she looked with a look of affection to th place, and of regret to leave it, and their goods that were in it, accord ing to the import of the verb נבט ——This implied unbelief and dis trust of what the angels had affirmed, that God would immediately de stroy the place. She did not believe, or she did not regard it; she stoppe by the way, and left her husband to go by himself; she would go n further, and might be at a considerable distance from *Zoar*, and so nea to *Sodom*, as, probably, to be involved in the terrible shower, an thereby turned into a nitro-sulphureous pillar. This gives the prope sense and force of our Lord's admonition, *Luke* xvii. 32. *Remember Lot wife.* Let the judgment of God upon her warn you of the folly an danger of hankering after, and being loath to part with small and tem poral things, when your life and happiness, the greatest and most lastin concerns, are at stake.

CHAP. XXV

CHAP. XXVI.

e State of RELIGION *in the World, when* GOD *made the Promise to* ABRAHAM.

THOUGH we may be sure, that our State of Trial hath been, from the beginning of the world, perfectly well adjusted, as to e proper balance of means and temptations, for all the purposes Divine Wisdom and Goodness, yet it is certain that the conta-on of evil so far spread in the earliest ages, as, in process of time, threaten the total extinction of true Religion and good morals. This evident in the case of the old world, where wickedness and impiety d at length, and by degrees, infected the whole race of mankind, cept *Noah*'s single family. And in about 450 years after the deluge, olatry and wickedness had spread and corrupted the world so far, that *dom* and four other cities, being universally debauched, were de-royed (one excepted for the reason already given) by a most tremendous dgment. The *Amorites*, and several other neighbouring nations, were en filling up the measure of their iniquity; (*Gen.* xv. 16, 19, 20, 21.) hich in about 400 years after was quite full; and God, who might ve destroyed them, as he did *Sodom*, &c. gave the *Israelites* a commis-on to expel, or extirpate them.

This spreading corruption, after the deluge, is not to be assigned to nple irreligion, but to religion directed to wrong objects and purposes. hile men retained the knowledge of the true God, they cared not to orify him by the practice of virtue and holiness, nor were thankful for s benefits. *Rom.* i. 21, 22. And artful men, through pride and wan-nness, indulging to idle conceits and false reasonings, involved their vn understanding, and that of others, in the thickest clouds of error d delusion. Probably, they represented the heavenly bodies, the sun, oon, and stars, as illustrious intelligences, who, being so eminently alted, must have the highest interest in the favour of God, the direc-on of human affairs, and the distribution of all temporal blessings; d therefore it would be sufficient to all the purposes of religion, to se-re their friendship, as mediators between God and them. Thus they ight *be driven*, enticed, drawn in, to worship them, (*Deut.* iv. 19.) such impious rites as were invented by the folly and ignorance of the me sophisters, and adapted to the depraved minds of such as listened them. Thus they might be deceived into the practice of all manner lewdness and vice. For the attributes of those supposed deities, and nefactors of mankind, being feigned purely by human imagination, ey would naturally be represented by men, who had their own interests d lusts to serve, in such manner as best suited the corrupt taste and in-inations of those who were disposed to follow them. If this was not e case at first, it may easily be conceived to have been so in process of ne, by after-improvements upon the original scheme of idolatry. And this method men would be led to believe they might be religious,

and gain health, long life, fruitful seasons, plenty, prosperity, not onl without the practice of virtue and holiness, but positively by lewd an wicked practices; and thus religion would be turned into an encourage ment to vice, and the principles of virtue and goodness would be extin guished.

Whether they were seduced precisely after this manner or not, th fact is certain, that their abominable idolatries were attended with abo minable lusts and intemperance, 1 *Pet.* iv. 3. Add to this, that cunnin men, who knew how to make their own advantage of the foibles o mankind, introduced into their minds notions of fate, destiny, fortune chance, necessity, with many other delusions. Hence arose professor of the vilest arts, pretending to look into futurity, to gratify maliciou desires, to secure good, and prevent bad luck to those who consulte them. *Deut.* xviii. 10. *Diviners, observers of times, enchanters, witche* or such as pretend to work upon the mind, or body, for evil purpose by herbs or potions; *charmers, consulters with a* pretended *familiar spiri wizards; necromancers.* And so far were they infatuated, that they mad their sons and daughters to pass through the fire, under the notion o sacrifices to their idols; probably, to gain their blessing upon their chil dren, and to make them healthy and fortunate. *Deut.* xii. 31. xviii. 10 *Lev.* xviii. 21. xx. 2. Thus their hope and trust, and their regards, wer diverted from God and his Providence to vain idols and the vile impostors.

The neglect and abuse of understanding, and the indulged irregula inclinations of the heart, were doubtless the spring and principal caus of this defection from God and virtue. But we may believe it was for warded and completed by the suggestions and instigations of the Devi and his angels; *the Prince of the power of the Air, the Spirit* whom Go permits *to work in the children of disobedience,* (Eph. ii. 2.) and to *decei the nations.* Rev. xx. 2, 3. For when men *receive not the love of th truth, that they may be saved, God* judicially *sends them strong delusion that they may believe a lie. That they may all be condemned, who believe n the truth, but have pleasure in unrighteousness.* 2 Thess. ii. 9—12.

Thus we see how idolatry first began, and by what means it might as it certainly did, spread in the world; and would have prevailed uni versally, as the remaining virtuous dropped of, and as men of understand ing happened to be drawn in by various allurements. For the hear even of *Solomon,* the great and wise, was, by the love of strange women so far turned away after idol gods, that he built high places and altar in honour of them, even in the neighbourhood of the city *Jerusalem* 1 Kin. xi. 1—8.

To prevent the universal prevalence of idolatry, and to preserve amon mankind the knowledge and worship of the living and true God, th wise and gracious Father of men was pleased to advance a new and nobl scheme, which, under several variations and improvements, was to reac to the end of time. The scheme was this, to choose and adopt one fa mily, afterwards to be formed into a nation, instructed in religious know ledge by God himself, and favoured with such extraordinary privileges and honours, above all other nations of the earth, as were in their ow nature adapted to engage them, by the most rational motives, to adhe

God and his worship. At the same time, to prevent their being infect-
vith the idolatries and vices of the rest of the world, as they certainly
uld have been, had they mingled with them, they were to be distin-
shed and separated from all other people by their diet, their dress, and
ers civil and religious rites and ceremonies; but more particularly
a secret mark in the flesh, by which they might be certainly known
n all other men. Thus they would be kept together in a body, and
dered from mixing with, and being corrupted by, their idolatrous
ghbours, and in every respect fitted to be an example and instruction
hem under the various dispensations wherewith they were visited.
d further, their laws and religious institutions being originally re-
ded in *books*, would more certainly be preserved and known in all fu-
e ages and generations. Thus God provided a store-house of reli-
us knowledge, a whole nation of priests, *Exod.* xix. 6. a school of in-
ction and wisdom for all the world. Or the nation of *Israelites* may
considered as a piece of leaven which in process of time was to lea-
the whole lump or mass of mankind.

braham, a person of the most eminent piety and virtue, was chosen
e the head and father of this nation; that, as he would always be held
reat veneration among them, he might always shine before their eyes
n illustrious pattern of godliness.

The ground of this scheme, and of God's singular regards to *Abra-*
and his posterity, was the COVENANT OF GRACE, the PROMISE
rant of favour and blessings to mankind in *Jesus Christ* our Lord.
o verily was fore-ordained before the foundation of the world, though *not*
ifested till the last times. 1 Pet. i. 20. This Covenant or grant was
published to *Adam*. Gen. iii. 15. *Her*, the woman's, *seed shall bruise*
head, O serpent, *and thou shalt bruise his heel*. Nor could it be wholly
nown to the Patriarchs; but it was much more clearly revealed to
aham. Gen. xii. 3. xvii. 7. xviii. 18. xxii. 16, 17, 18. And this
he subject which now requires our particular attention. [See the
atise *on the Covenant of Grace*, &c.]

CHAP. XXVII.

Methods of DIVINE WISDOM *in raising up a new and religious* NATION.

TO return to the age in which *Abraham* lived. The delusions of
idolatry were so strong, and the human understanding so weak,
all nations seem to have run into it at once and alike; and such
the infatuating and spreading nature of the infection, that there was
tional prospect of the reformation of any one of them. Violence
could

could not be used, argument and reasoning would have no effect, the most dreadful judgments were forgotten, or disregarded *. The knowledge and worship of the one living and true God, the great principle of moral goodness, and of public and private happiness, would have been totally lost in the earth. But the Father and Governor of men provided a remedy. Instead of destroying all nations, as at the deluge, it was the merciful scheme of Divine Wisdom to create, out of one pious and faithful person, *Abraham*, a new and religious nation, separated from all the rest, in order to ascertain among them, and at length among all nations, right sentiments of his Being, Perfections, and Providence. And it is greatly worth our while to observe the steps and Methods by which God was pleased to train them up for this purpose.

First, *Abraham* is required to cast himself wholly upon *God*'s Providence, by removing, at *God*'s command, from his own kindred and country, to an unknown distant land, which God would shew him; assuring him of his presence and special blessing. *Genesis* xii. 1, 2, 3. Thus *God* took him under his immediate care and protection. In this strange land he wandered about as long as he lived, but *God* was with him everywhere. *God* appeared to him, and conversed with him frequently and familiarly. By extraordinary interpositions, and express declarations from time to time, *God* encouraged, directed, prospered, guarded and provided for him. He became very rich, great, and honourable; but all was most visibly the gift and operation of *God*. *God* gave him repeated assurances, that he would *make of* him *a great nation*, give his posterity the whole land of *Canaan*, and that *in his seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed*. But he was not to have a son, till the birth of that son was manifestly the extraordinary miraculous effect of Divine Power, and insured the performance of the promises. What could be more engaging than all these circumstances? What more proper to excite in a man, duty, affection, and confidence towards God? The same encouragements, blessings, and promises are repeated to *Isaac*, and afterwards to *Jacob*, and the same heavenly correspondence is kept open with them during their lives. *Egypt*, then a plentiful country, of genius and learning, [*Acts* vii. 22.] the resort of the curious and inquisitive was chosen to be the nursery of this family. Thither was *Joseph* first carried by a singular Providence, sold for a slave, and most unjustly cast into prison, but only that *God* might shew himself in his enlargement. By means which *God* only could provide and direct, he was at once released from a jail, and raised to almost regal honour and authority. And in high dignity and esteem, and with astonishing success, which none but *God* could give, in the most important affairs, he continued all the days of his life.

By him *God* predicted seven years of prodigious plenty in *Egypt*, and seven succeeding years of the most distressing famine in the land, and in all the adjacent countries. By this event, *Jacob*'s whole family, in all seventy-two souls, were brought to reside, with the great good-will of the king, and of the whole nation, in *Goshen*, the richest province in th

* Reckoning by the age of man, the world was 20 years old; for God called *Abraham* in the year of the world 2083.

land of *Egypt*, Gen. xlviii. 6. where their situation, manners, and
y of living, would keep them separate from their idolatrous neigh-
rs. *Gen.* xliii. 32. xlvi. 34. Thus God, by a surprising train of
nts, introduced the family of *Abraham* into the nursery where they
e to grow up into a nation. At length a prince arose, *who knew*,
regarded, *not Joseph*, Exodus i. 8. Then they fell into a state of sla-
y, and the severest oppression and suffering, for about 140 years. But
was only to render the power of God more conspicuous in their
servation and deliverance. The more they are oppressed, and the
e cruelly they were used, the more they increase and flourish,
they were numerous enough to be formed into a nation. Then
ses was miraculously preserved, educated by *Pharaoh*'s daughter
ll the wisdom of the *Egyptians*, and raised up to be their deliverer.
d now the vials of Divine Wrath are poured out one after another
n *Egypt*. God made bare his arm, or gave the most signal and stri-
g demonstrations of his Being and Power, infinitely superior not only
ll human strength, but also to all the pretended Deities in which
Egyptians trusted. *Exodus* xii. 12.

To this end (1.) the Divine Wisdom permitted, on this special occa-
, *Pharaoh*'s magicians, possibly by the ministry of evil spirits, or by
raordinary powers immediately communicated to the enchanters, to
tate some of the miracles which *Moses* wrought, in order to display
e clearly his own Divine Power; and to convince both *Egyptians*
Israelites of the vanity of such arts, by controling and defeating
m, even when exercised in the highest degree. So a man was born
d, and *Lazarus* died, on purpose to give our Lord an opportunity of
onstrating his power, and the truth of his mission. *John* ix. 3. xi. 4.
for that reason, an extraordinary power might be permitted to
spirits to possess the bodies of men, that our Saviour's dominion over
devil and his angels might be more evidently shewn. The invisible
ld of spirits may undergo many variations, and be subject to diffe-
restraints and regulations in different ages, so as to interfere more
ss, or not at all in human affairs. *Jortin.*

2.) God hardened *Pharaoh*'s heart, by granting him respite from one
gue after another, that he might multiply, and so render more con-
uous, the demonstrations of his Being and Supreme Dominion.
this is all that God did towards hardening *Pharaoh*'s heart. See
dus viii. 15. ix. 34, 35, and verse 15, 16. *For now*, saith the Lord, *I*
stretched out my hand [in the preceding plague of boils and blains,]
I have smitten thee, and thy people, with the pestilence, and [by this
ue] *thou mightest have been cut off from the earth. But in very deed*
his cause I have raised thee up, [I have restored thee to health, by re-
ing the pestilential boils,] that by respiting thy destruction, I may
in thee more and greater proofs of my Almighty Power.

ll the miracles which God wrought in *Egypt*, were such as must be
and acknowledged to come from him alone, and not from any pos-
power of man, or from any natural accidents. This is true of all
en plagues, but especially of the last. The pestilence, in ordinary
, sweeps away multitudes promiscuously; but when it singleth out
the first-born in every family, it must plainly appear to be a judg-
ment

ment immediately from the hand or direction of God; [*Exodus* xii. 29 as it was to the *Israelites* a just retribution of the cruelty of the *Egyp tians* in endeavouring to destroy all their male children. *Exodus* i. 1 [Note—In those ages and circumstances of the world, when men we not so capable of being convinced by abstract reasoning, and probabl understood nothing of the perfections of God *a priori*, his supreme au thority and omnipotence would be best demonstrated by *facts*, which ex perimentally proved his uncontroled dominion over all other powers, an over universal Nature.] At last *Pharaoh* and his people give up th cause. God's superior power is owned, because so dreadfully experien ced. The *Egyptians* urge them to depart, and to remove all objection that might hinder their departure, willingly give them the most precio and valuable of their possessions, [which, by the way, might be bu equal payment for the labour of so great a multitude, for 140 years. See *Exodus* xii. 33, &c. Verse 35. *And the children of Israel*—שאלו *asked of the Egyptians jewels*, &c. i. e. asked the *Egyptians* to give the jewels, &c. [שאל signifies to *ask to give*, as well as to *lend*. Josh. xv 18, 19. xix. 50. *Jud.* v. 25. viii. 25, 26. *Psal.* ii. 8. See Hebre English Concordance.] Verse 36. *So that they lent unto them*, &c. So that they readily gave them, &c. וישאלום in *Hiphkid* to make t ask, i. e. to encourage, to gratify asking by freely giving. [Note— Upon the occasion of the death of all the first-born among the *Egyptian* and the departure of the *Israelites* out of *Egypt*, a commemorative festi val, the *passover*, is instituted; an ordinance very proper for preservin the perpetual memory of the power and goodness of God among th *Israelites*.

The *Israelites* leave *Egypt*, in number no less than twenty-four hun dred thousand, *Num.* i. 45, 46. and all Nature giveth way before them A passage is open for them through the Red-sea, which closes upon, an overwhelms *Pharaoh* and his pursuing army. Pillars of cloud and fir alternately appearing in the air, direct their march. Bitter fountai are made sweet. In a dry, thirsty, barren country, they are supplied wit water from the hard and flinty rock, and with food from the sky fo forty years together. With all the appearances of glory and dreadf majesty, God, as their King and Sovereign, established his Covenan or entered into a solemn contract, with them in mount *Horeb*; choosin them for *a peculiar treasure above all people*, Exodus xix. 5. and engagin himself to be their God and King, and to bestow on them all nation blessings upon condition they were obedient, adhered to his worshi and kept clear of idolatry, with which they had been tinctured in *Egyp* (Lev. xvii. 7. Josh. xxiv. 14. Ezek. xx. 8.) otherwise they might ex pect the severest judgments, *Deut.* xxix. 10, &c. At the same time h gave them a system of laws and statutes, most excellent in themselve fitted to their present temper and circumstances, as well as to the futu intents and purposes of the Gospel dispensation. Here God took up h residence among them in the tabernacle, afterwards in the temple, se ting himself at the head of their affairs, and upon all important occ sions directing them as an oracle. And all this, to attach and unite th one nation to himself.

At length, through a train of very striking miracles, (*Jordan* divided, e walls of *Jericho* thrown down) he brought them into the promised nd, with a commission to destroy all the inhabitants, the measure of hose iniquity was then full; and who probably were more corrupt an any of their neighbours, and as deserving of destruction as *Sodom* d *Gomorrha*, for all the idolatrous, brutish, cruel, incestuous, and natural crimes, which universally prevailed amongst them. Had the *raelites* been mixed with the idolatrous *Canaanites*, they would soon have st the knowledge of God, and been involved in all their corruptions; it being made the instruments of their destruction, this would give em the greater horror of those crimes, which they knew (for *Moses* d told them, *Deut.* ix. 4, 5.) were thus dreadfully avenged by their ms. Moreover, thus they would give themselves a clear demonstra-on, that idol gods had no power to defend and preserve their votaries. herefore it was not unjust in God to command the destruction of the *naanites*, nor cruel in his servants to execute that command, (any ore than it is to extirpate outlaws, and the worst of criminals, by legal thority) but in the views of Divine Wisdom, the properest way of tirpating them, considering the effects it would have upon the minds the *Israelites*.

Here we may observe, (1.) That the *Israelites* made no claim to the nd of *Canaan* in their own right. The right was in God, who gave them. (2.) We may observe a good reason why the Divine Wisdom ected this scheme for preserving true religion, only in the one nation the *Israelites*. Because, had he selected a pious person and his family, he selected *Abraham* and his posterity, out of every nation upon rth, then, to make room for them, every nation upon earth must have en devoted to destruction, as the *Canaanites* were. But seeing the hole earth was not filled with violence, injustice, rapine, and oppres-on, God in much lenity and forbearance was pleased to *wink at*, or verlook, the ignorance and error of other nations, without punishing em as they deserved, *Acts* xvii. 30. leaving them to the light of Na-re, *Acts* xiv. 16. to feel, or grope after his existence and perfections, *cts* xvii. 26, 27. and to the dictates of conscience, for their conduct in fe; while he continued his providential care in giving the supplies of fe, and visiting them with suitable dispensations; and will, at last, dge them in perfect equity, making allowance for all unavoidable de-cts. *Rom.* ii. 6, 10, 11, 12.

Even after the *Israelites* were settled in the land, the danger of idolatry as not over. They were ready on every occasion to catch the infec-on from their neighbours; and still there was need of further Divine nterpositions. And through a long course of years they were exercised ith various dispensations, according as they did or did not adhere to he worship of God. When they clave unto the Lord, they were pro-perous and triumphant; when they forsook him, and followed strange ods, they were in great distress, in servitude, and captivity; till by re-eated calamities, and signal deliverances, accompanied with the clearer ght, and more rational convictions, which, at length, they were pre-ared to receive from their prophets, they were at last weaned from ido-

latry, after the Babyloniſh captivity, about 955 years after their return out of *Egypt*; and never relapſed into it again *.

All this was neceſſary, and, in conſiſtence with human agency, and the gradual improvements of mankind, was the propereſt method to preſerve the knowledge of the true God in the world, not only in that ſingle nation, but in all the nations of the earth. For the diſpenſation among the *Jews*, like a piece of leaven, which leaveneth the whole maſs, was intended for the benefit of all mankind; as by this means they became examples and inſtructors, while they remained in their own country, to all their neighbours; and when in captivity, or diſperſion, as they carried with them the knowledge of God into the countries where they were diſperſed; till the nations ſhould, by this and other means of improvement, be prepared to receive the cleareſt revelation of the true God, and of eternal life by the *Meſſiah*. Which was the great end and deſign of the ſcheme which we have been conſidering.

And now, the more a thinking man revolves in his mind this train of affairs, and ſees how one nation are led, ſtep by ſtep, as their capacities would admit, to a ſenſe of the pre-eminence and ſovereignty of the true God, in order to be ſet apart as the repoſitory of his ſacred laws and religion, till they and all mankind are fit for the reception of them in a more ſimple, clear, and extenſive form, under the Goſpel, the more he will confeſs and admire the ſignatures of wiſdom and goodneſs that appear through the whole and every part of the economy.

There is one thing deſerves particular attention, I mean, the ſpirit and behaviour of the *Iſraelites* in the wilderneſs. A very remarkable inſtance of the wretched effects of ſervitude upon the human ſoul. They had been ſlaves to the *Egyptians* for about 140 years; their ſpirits were debaſed, their judgments weak, their ſenſe of God and religion very low: they were very defective in attention, gratitude, generoſity; full of diſtruſt and uneaſy ſuſpicions; complaining and murmuring under the moſt aſtoniſhing diſplays of Divine Power and Goodneſs, as if ſtill under the frowns and ſcourges of their unjuſt taſk-maſters; could ſcarce raiſe their thoughts to proſpects the moſt pleaſing and joyous; knew not how to value the bleſſings of liberty; of a taſte ſo mean and illiberal, that the fleſh and fiſh, the cucumbers, the melons, the leeks, onions and garlick, and ſuch good doings in *Egypt*, weighed more with them than bread from heaven, and all the Divine aſſurances and demonſtrations that they ſhould be raiſed to the nobleſt privileges, the higheſt honour and felicity, as a peculiar treaſure to God, above all people in the world. *Num.* xi. 4, 5, 6.

In ſhort, nothing would do; the ill qualities of ſlavery were engrained in their hearts; a groveling, thoughtleſs, ſturdy, daſtardly ſpirit fatigued the Divine Patience, counteracted and defeated all his wiſe and beneficent meaſures; they could not be worked up to that ſenſe of God, that

* Reckoning by the age of man, the world was then 34 years old; for the *Jews* returned from the *Babyloniſh* captivity about the year of the world 3468.

it eſteem of his higheſt favours, that gratitude and generous dutiful-ſs, that magnanimity of ſpirit, which were neceſſary to their conquer-g and enjoying the promiſed land. And therefore the wiſdom of God ermined they ſhould not attempt the poſſeſſion of it, till that gene-ion of ſlaves, namely, all above 20 years of age, were dead and bu-d. However, this did not lie out of the Divine plan. It ſerved a at purpoſe, namely, to warn that, and all future ages of the church, h *Jewiſh* and Chriſtian, that if they deſpiſe and abuſe the goodneſs of od, and the noble privileges and proſpects they enjoy, they ſhall for-t the benefit of them. And the Apoſtle applieth it to this very im-rtant uſe, with great force and propriety, in the epiſtle to the *Hebrews*, ap. ii. ver. 15, to the end, and chap. iv. ver. 1—12.

Thus, for a general view of this noble ſcheme. The nature and cellency of it will ſtand in a ſtronger light, if we examine the parti-ar privileges and honours conferred upon this diſtinguiſhed nation, ir tendency to promote piety and virtue, and the relation they bear to ſtate of things under the Goſpel. For this part of the ſubject we ſt turn to my *Key to the Apoſtolic Writings*.

CHAP. XXVIII.

Of the Jewiſh RITUAL, *or Ceremonial* LAW.

WE muſt now turn back to the *Moſaic* Conſtitution; which conſiſted, 1. Of political and judicial Laws. For which conſult r. LOWMAN on *The Civil Government of the Hebrews*. 2. Of moral cepts, ſuch as the ten commandments. 3. Of Rites and Ceremo-s, ſuch as circumciſion, ſacrifices, waſhings, purifications, the uſe certain garments, &c. and divers Rites uſed by the prieſts in the ernacle. For a particular account of which, conſult Mr. LOWMAN *the Ritual of the Hebrew Worſhip*. I ſhall only obſerve in general, t the deſign of thoſe Ceremonies, juſtly explained, was to convey re-ous and moral inſtructions, as well as the expreſs precepts.

Hieroglyphics, *which repreſent the ſenſe of the mind, by outward figures, ctions*, were the firſt and moſt ancient literature. So the govern-nt of the world by Divine Providence, and its extraordinary inter-ition in favour of good men, is repreſented by a ladder ſtanding upon earth, and reaching to heaven, with the angels aſcending and de-nding on it, to receive and execute orders from God above, who eth over all. *Gen.* xxviii. 12, 13. In the ſtyle of this *Hieroglyphic* our rd ſpeaks, *John* i. 51. *Hereafter ſhall you ſee heaven open, and the an-of God aſcending and deſcending upon the Son of Man*, as upon *Jacob*; aning, you ſhall ſee an extraordinary Divine Interpoſition working in

my favour, by many miraculous operations. [DR. BENSON.] The exaltation of *Joseph* above the rest of the family, was represented by the Hieroglyphic of his sheaf standing upright, and the eleven sheaves of his brothers standing round about and bowing to it; as also of the sun, moon, and eleven stars, making obeisance to him. *Gen.* xxxvii. 7, 9. The tribe of *Judah* is represented by a young lion; *Issachar*, by a strong ass; *Dan*, by a serpent lurking in the road; *Naphtali*, by a hind; *Joseph* by a fruitful bough; *Benjamin*, by a ravening wolf. *Gen.* xlix. 9, 14, &c. A *rod* or staff, as it is an instrument of striking or beating down, is the Hieroglyphic of power exerted in conquering, punishing, ruling. *Isaiah* x. 5, 24; and of dominion and authority, *Psalm* cx. 2; and as such, is continued to this day, under the name of a sceptre. With such a rod *Moses* and *Aaron* appeared before *Pharaoh*, as hieroglyphically representing the power and authority of God, in whose name they demanded the release of the *Israelites*. Exod. vii. 15. And thus they appeared as men of learning, and acted agreeably to the literature of the age. *Horn* represented temporal power and dominion. 1 *Sam.* ii. 10. 1 *Kings* xxii. 11. *Psal.* lxxxix. 24. A *yoke*, such as slaves carried upon their shoulders, servitude, or bondage. *Gen.* xxvii. 37, 40. *Jer.* xxvii. 2, 6. xxviii. 10.

This may serve to explain the nature of hieroglyphics; a sort of language the *Jews* were then accustomed to, being the learning of that age, which they would understand much better than abstract reasoning about moral truths and duties. We may therefore, on this account well admit, that the Rites and Ceremonies of their religious institution were hieroglyphic, and intended by external representations to give them useful instructions in true religion and real goodness. If we consult the Prophets and Apostles, who were well acquainted with their meaning, we shall find so much evidence of the moral and spiritual intention of many, as may induce us to believe, this was the sense and spirit of all the rest.

They were enjoined various and frequent ablutions, or washings with water; the common use of which is to discharge the body from all dirt and filth, and to keep it clean. This was a very easy representation of purity of mind, or of an heart purged from the filth of sin. And so the Prophets understood it. *Psal.* li. 2. *Wash me from mine iniquity.* Ver. 7. *Wash me, and I shall be clean.* Isai. i. 16. *Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean, put away the evil of your doings.*——*Cease to do evil, learn to do well.* Jer. iv. 14. Acts xxii. 16. Heb. x. 22. Rev. i. 5. Anointing with oil, or ointment, by which the head was beautified, and the countenance exhilarated, had the signification of honour, joy, holiness, and inspiration, *Psal.* xlv. 7. *Acts* x. 38. The priests officiated in garments of fine linen, *Exod.* xxxix. 27; meaning, that the priests should be *clothed*, or have their souls adorned *with righteousness*. Psal. cxxxii. *For the fine linen is the righteousness of Saints.* Rev. xix. 8. Burning incense, whose smoak riseth up with a pleasant smell, was an hieroglyphic representation of acceptable prayer. *Psal.* cxli. 2. *Luke* i. 10. *Rev.* viii. 3, 4. Circumcision had relation to the heart and soul, or to the retrenching all inordinate affections and inclinations. *Lev.* xxvi. 41. *Deut.* x. 12—17. xxx. 6. *Jer.* iv. 4. *Rom.* ii. 29. The sprinkling of blood

of the water of ſeparation, (*Num.* xix. 13, 19.) was hieroglyphic, had a moral ſignification. See *Heb.* ix. 13, 14. x. 22. xii. 24. *Pet.* i. 2. And ſo had the muzzled mouth of the ox, *Deut.* xxv. 4. mpared with 1 *Cor.* ix. 9, 10. 1 *Tim.* v. 17, 18.

Some may have indulged too much to imagination, and found more ſteries in the Hebrew Ritual than were really deſigned; but theſe in-ces, explained by authentic evidence, may convince us, that the ole had a rational and ſpiritual meaning. And as we are taught in Goſpel every thing relating to virtue and religion in the plaineſt nner, we need not give ourſelves much trouble about diſcovering the aning of the other Rites, which are not explained by Prophets and oſtles. Only the affair of ſacrifices is ſo often alluded to in the New ſtament, and ſeems to have ſuch reſpect to the ſacrifice of our Lord, t it demands a more particular examination. [Turn to the *Scripture-ctrine of Atonement.*]

CHAP. XXIX.

SCRIPTURE-CHRONOLOGY *from the* EXODUS *to the Founding of* SOLOMON'S *Temple.*

THIS ſpace of time was 480 years; as appears from 1 *Kings*, vi. 1. which is made out, in the beſt manner I have yet ſeen, as ows:

ars before Chriſt.		Years.	Proofs.
1451	From the *Exodus* to the death of *Moſes*, and ſucceſſion of *Joſhua*.	40	*Exod.* vii. 7. *Acts* vii. 30.
	Note—*Moſes* was 40 years old, when he fled out of *Egypt*, Acts vii. 23. He was 40 years with *Jethro*, Exod. vii. 7. and 40 years in the wilderneſs with the *Iſraelites*. Therefore, he was 120 when he died. *Deut.* xxxiv. 7.		
1426	From the ſucceſſion of *Joſhua* to his death.	25	*Joſephus.*
	Note—after the death of *Joſhua* the *Iſraelites* fell into idolatry, *Judg.* ii. 7, *&c.* And in thoſe licentious		

Years before Christ.		Years.	Proofs.
	times, about the year before Christ 1398, the events recorded in the xviith and xviiith chapters of the book of *Judges*, by which idolatry was introduced into the tribe of *Ephraim*, and by that means propagated among the *Danites*, might happen. For it was in the times when *there was no king in Israel.* And in the same unhappy period fell out, most probably, the war of the eleven tribes against *Benjamin*, of which we read *Judg.* xix. xx. xxi. chapters. For *Phineas*, the son of *Eleazar*, (Josh. xxiv. 33. 1 Chron. vi. 4.) who after the death of *Joshua* succeeded his father, about the year before Christ 1402, was then high-priest, *Judg.* xx. 28. *And in those days* also *there was no king in Israel*, chap. xxi. 25. which shews it was in the same times with the preceding events.		
1391	From the death of *Joshua* to the bondage of East-*Israel* under *Cushan.*	35	*Judg.* iii. 8.
1383	To their deliverance by *Othniel.*	8	. . 9, 10, 11.
1343	To the bondage of East-*Israel* under *Eglon*, king of *Moab.*	40	.. 12, 13, 14.
1325	To their deliverance by *Ehud.* [After which, that part of *Israel* had rest for 80 years, *Judg.* iii. 30.] Note — It may probably be supposed, that scarce any of the judges ruled over the whole country of *Israel*, but some in one part, and some in another; so that, at the same time, there might be several judges in several parts of the land; and	18	. . . 15—30.

ears before Christ.		Years.	Proofs.
	and peace and liberty in one part, when there was war and slavery in another. The eastern part, that had shaken off the yoke of *Moab*, had rest 80 years; but, in the mean while, the *Philistines* invaded the western parts, and were repulsed by *Shamgar*, Judg. iii. 31. Afterward *Jabin* afflicted the northern tribes, chap. iv. 2. while the eastern parts still remained in peace. See Bp. PATRICK on *Judg.* xi. 26.		
1285	To the deliverance of North-*Israel* from *Jabin*, by *Deborah* and *Baruch*. [After which that part of the land had rest 40 years. *Judg.* v. 31.]	40	Authority of Chronologers.
1245.	To the bondage of North and East *Israel* under the *Midianites*, for 7 years. Note—In some of those 7 years, probably, *Elimelech* removed into the land of *Moab*, by reason of the famine, occasioned by the depredations of the *Midianites*, *Ruth* i. 1, 2. *Judg.* vi. 4.	40	*Judg.* vi. 1.
1238	To their deliverance by *Gideon*.	7	*Jud.* vi. 1, *&c.*
1199	To *Abimelech*'s usurpation, 40 years, or 39 complete.	39	. . . viii. 28.
1196	To *Tola*, judge over North and East *Israel*.	3	. . . ix. 22.
1173	To *Jair*, judge over North and East *Israel*. Note —— While *Jair* was judge, North and East *Israel* were in bondage to the *Ammonites* 18 years, *Judg.* x. 8. At the same time with *Jair*, *Eli* began to judge South and West *Israel* 40 years, 1 *Sam.* iv. 18; all which time that part of *Israel* was oppressed by the *Philistines*,	23	. . . x. 1, 2.

Years before Christ.		Years.	Proofs.
	Judg. xiii. 1. In the first of those forty years of *Eli*, which was also the first year of *Jair*, *Samson* might be born; who lived 40 years, and judged West-*Israel*, (while *Eli* also was judge there, and while that part of the country was under the *Philistines*,) 20 years, *Judg.* xv. 20. [*Eli* judging in civil affairs; *Samson* by harassing the *Philistines*. USHER.] About the 13th year of *Eli*, before *Christ* 1160, *Samuel* might be born.		
1152	From *Jair* to *Jephthah*, who delivered North and East *Israel* from the *Ammonites*, 22, or 21 complete years.	21	*Judg.* x. 3.
1147	From *Jephthah* to *Ibzan*, over North and East *Israel*, six, or five complete years.	5	. . . xii. 7.
1140	From *Ibzan* to his successor *Elon*, in North and East-*Israel*.	7	. . . . . 9.
1135	About the fifth year of *Elon*, *Samuel* was publicly known to be a Prophet, 1 *Sam.* iii.		
1133	20. iv. 1. About the seventh of *Elon*, *Samson* pulled down the temple, *Judg.* xvi. 30. and destroyed great numbers of the *Philistines*. USHER thinks that this calamity might encourage the South and West *Israelites* to give them battle, 1 *Sam.* iv. 1, &c.		
1130	From *Elon* to *Abdon*, over North and East *Israel*.	10	*Judg.* xii. 11.
1122	From *Abdon* to his successor *Samuel*, who now was also judge over North and East *Israel*, as he had been before over South and West *Israel*, 1 *Sam.* vii. 15, 16, 17. pro-		

ears before Christ.		Years.	Proofs.
	17. probably, from the time that he was publicly known to be a Prophet.	8	*Judg.* xii. 14.
1094	From *Samuel* to king *Saul.*	28	Chronologers
1054	From *Saul* to *David.*	40	*Acts* xiii. 21.
1014	From *David to Solomon.*	40	1 *Kings* ii. 11.
	From *Solomon* to the founding of the temple, four, or three complete years.	3	. . . . . vi. 1.
	In all . . .	480	1 *Kings* vi. 1.

CHAP. XXX.

uthors within the Period from the EXODUS *to the Founding of* SOLOMON'S *Temple.*

ABOUT the beginning of this Period books began to be written; and it hath furnished the world with the noblest productions, th in history, poetry, and the instructive kind.

The Book of JOB.

IF *Job* wrote his own book; or if it was written by *Elihu*, one of the terlocutors, as some gather from *chap.* xxxii. 10, 15, &c. where he eaks in the language of the writer of the Book; and if *Moses* found it nen he was with *Jethro* in *Midian*, and transcribed it, adding the histo- cal parts at the beginning and the end; then this Book of *Job* is earlier an this Period, and the oldest Book in the world. And, as it is wor- y of the highest antiquity, any of these suppositions is far more pro- ble than theirs who imagine it was written in a later age, about the ne of the *Babylonish* captivity.

The PENTATEUCH.

THAT *Moses* wrote the *Pentateuch*, or fivefold volume, (from πεντε, *inque*, and τευχος, *volumen*, *liber*, (containing the five books in the ible, we have the same reason to believe, as we have that *Homer* wrote the

the *Iliad*; namely, the consent of all the learned in all ages. The first of these books is *Geneſis*, בראשית containing the only history of the world from the creation down to *Jacob*'s removing into *Egypt*, for 2298 years. 2. *Exodus*, שמות is the history of the departure of the *Iſraelites* out of *Egypt*, and of the erecting and furniſhing of the tabernacle. 3. *Leviticus*, ויקרא in which are the laws, ceremonies, and ſacrifices of the Jewiſh religion, and what particularly related to the *Levites*. 4. *Numbers*, במדבר begins with the numbering of the *Iſraelites*; after which ſeveral laws and remarkable events are recorded. 5. *Deuteronomy*, דברים is a repetition and an abridgement of the law, with exhortations and motives to the obſervance of it.

The Book of JOSHUA.

JOSHUA probably wrote the laſt chapter of *Deuteronomy*, and the Book of *Joſhua*, containing an account of his own acts, in conquering and dividing the land of *Canaan*; and *Phineas*, the high prieſt, might add the five laſt verſes relating to the death of *Joſhua*, and of his father *Eleazar* the high-prieſt.

The Book of JUDGES,

WAS certainly written before the ſecond book of *Samuel*; compare 2 *Sam.* xi. 21. with *Judg.* ix. 53; and before *David* had taken *Jeruſalem*, 2 *Sam.* v. 6. *Judg.* i. 21. *Samuel*, the Prophet, or Seer, the laſt of the Judges, was an hiſtorian, 1 *Chron.* xxix. 29. and probably wrote this Book of *Judges*; in which we read the great efficacy of religion to make a nation happy, and the diſmal calamities which impiety brings along with it. St. *Paul* (*Heb.* xi. 32.) points out ſome examples of heroic, and ſurpriſingly ſucceſsful faith in *Gideon*, *Barak*, *Samſon*, and *Jephthah*, whoſe hiſtory is recorded in this Book. It conſiſts of two parts, the one containing the hiſtory of the Judges, from *Othniel* to *Samuel*, which part ends with the xvith chapter; the other, containing ſeveral memorable actions, performed not long after the death of *Joſhua*, is thrown to the end of the Book, that it might not interrupt the thread of the hiſtory.

The Book of RUTH.

RUTH may be conſidered as an appendage to the book of *Judges*, and brings down the hiſtory to the times of *Samuel*, who probably was the author of it, and draws the lineage of *Judah* down to *David*. chap. iv. 18. Which makes it not unlikely, that it was written after *David* was anointed by *Samuel*. 1 Sam. xvi. 13.

Here it may not be improper to obſerve, that *Samuel* was not only an author, but otherwiſe ſeems to have been a great promoter of literature and religion. We never read of the companies or colleges of Prophets till

ll this time; and therefore, probably, he erected them. They were eminaries for the inſtruction of youth in the knowledge of the law, and or training them up in the exerciſes of piety; particularly in the ſinging f ſacred hymns, in concert with inſtrumental muſic. This, in the lan- uage of thoſe times, was propheſying, 1 *Sam.* x. 5. 1 *Chron.* xxv. 1, 2, , 7. They were not, ſtrictly ſpeaking, all of them *Prophets*; but upon me of them God beſtowed the ſpirit of prophecy, or of predicting ture *events*, 2 Kings ii. 3. And we may ſuppoſe, that moſt of the Pro- hets, properly ſo called, came out of thoſe ſchools. *Amos* excepts him- lf, *chap.* vii. 14.——*I was no Prophet, neither was I a Prophet's ſon*, e. Diſciple; for the ſcholars were called *the ſons of the Prophets*. At heir head, as governor, they had ſome venerable truly-inſpired Prophet, vho was called their *father*. 1 *Sam.* x. 12. 2 *Kings* ii. 12. *Samuel* was ne, and perhaps the firſt of thoſe *fathers*, or governors. 1 *Sam.* xix. 20. *Elijah* was another. 2 *Kings* ii. 12. And *Eliſha* ſucceeded him in this ffice. 2 *Kings* iv. 38. *Eliſha* came to *Gilgal*——*and the ſons of the Pro- hets were ſitting before him.* The maſter, or *father*, ſat above; and the cholars below, before him, *at his feet*. 2 Kings ii. 3. *Knoweſt thou that he Lord will take away thy maſter from thy head?* or from the ſeat, where e ſits above thy head——See *Acts* xxii. 3. They lived together in ociety, 2 *Kings* vi. 1; and when they had done their lectures, and reli- ious exerciſes, were wont to eat together with their maſters. 2 *Kings* v. 38, *&c.* This inſtitution had a manifeſt tendency to advance religion nd learning.

I. II. SAMUEL.

1 SAMUEL was wrote before 1 *Kings*. 1 *Kings* ii. 17. 1 *Sam.* ii. 31, 35, compared; and it is not unreaſonably ſuppoſed, that *Samuel* wrote he firſt 24 chapters; and that, after his death, the hiſtory of *David* was continued in the firſt and ſecond Books of *Samuel* by the Prophets *Gad* and *Nathan*. 1 Chron. xxix. 29.

I. II. KINGS.

THESE Books contain the hiſtory of the kings of *Judah* and *Iſrael*, from *Solomon* to the captivity in *Babylon*, for the ſpace of 423 years. In his Period were ſeveral hiſtoriographers; for we read of *the book of the Acts of Solomon*, 1 Kings xi. 41. which *Acts of Solomon* were recorded in *the Book of Nathan the Prophet, and in the Prophecy of Ahijah the Shilonite, and in the Viſions of Iddo the Seer*. 2 Chron. ix. 29. Which *Iddo* was employed, together with *Shemaiah* the Prophet, in writing the Acts of *Rehoboam*. 2 Chron. xii. 15. We alſo read of the book of *Jehu*, the Prophet, relating the Acts of king *Jehoſhaphat*. 2 Chron. xx. 34. 1 *Kings* xvi. 1. And *Iſaiah*, the Prophet, wrote the Acts of king *Uzziah*, 2 Chron. xxvi. 22; and alſo of king *Hezekiah*, 2 Chron. xxxii. 32. And it is highly probable, that he wrote the hiſtory of the two intermediate kings

kings *Jotham* and *Ahaz*, in whose reigns he lived. *Isai.* i. 1. And, we may well suppose, all these histories, added one to another, make the two Books of *Kings*.

Note——No writer of the history of the kings of *Judah* or *Israel* is any where expressly named; but his title is either given him as a Prophet, or it appears from some other part of Scripture that he was a Prophet. This quality of the writer was given to draw from us a proportionable respect, and make us receive the history with the reverence which is its due. The Prophets were the *Jewish* historians; therefore to the historical books, *Joshua*, *Judges*, I. II. *Samuel*, I. II. *Kings*, they give the title of נביאים ראשונים the *former Prophets*; as they give the title of נביאים אחרונים the *latter Prophets*, to *Isaiah*, *Jeremiah*, &c.

The Book of PSALMS,

WAS composed by several authors, but chiefly by king *David*. *Moses* composed the xcth Psalm, when God had shortened the lives of the *Israelites* in the wilderness, as a punishment for their unbelief. The cxxxviith Psalm was indited soon after their transportation to the land of *Babylon*, and captivity there, and the cxxvith upon their return out of it. Others were made upon other occasions; as may be seen in their titles, (although those are not supposed to be of the same authority with the text) or collected from the sense and scope of the Psalm. For which Bp. PATRICK's Paraphrase may be consulted.

The Book of Psalms is divided into five parts. The first reaches to the end of the xlist Psalm; the second, to the end of the lxxiid Psalm; the third, to the end of the lxxxixth; the fourth, to the end of the cvith; and the fifth part, to the end of the whole.

It is a collection of divine odes, sublime and elegant, far beyond all human compositions; consisting of the loftiest celebrations of the Divine Praises, the most lively and fervent devotions of meditation, thanksgiving, prayer and supplication, faith, hope, and trust in God in every condition, and the most excellent instructions in every branch of piety and virtue. And the frequent reading of it hath a strong tendency to establish in our minds the principles of true wisdom, even every right disposition towards God and man; and that purity of heart, and serenity of mind, which is a fund of comfort and joy in the ways of God, and will animate us to walk in them with steadiness and delight.

Moses was the first that composed sacred hymns, that we read of, *Exod.* xv. *Deborah* the next, *Judg.* v. and then *Hannah*, 1 *Sam.* ii. But *David*, an admirable artist in music, (1 *Sam.* xvi. 18. *Amos* vi. 5.) carried divine poetry and psalmody to its perfection; and therefore is called *the sweet Psalmist of Israel*. 2 *Sam.* xxiii. 1. He, doubtless by Divine Authority, appointed the singing of psalms by a select company of skilful persons, in the solemn worship of the tabernacle, 1 *Chron.* vi. 31. xvi. 4——8. which *Solomon* continued in the temple, 2 *Chron.* v. 12, 13. And so did *Ezra*, as soon as the foundation of the second temple was laid, *Ezra* iii. 10, 11. Hence the people became well acquainted with the songs of *Sion*; and having committed them to memory, were famous

mous for melodious singing among the neighbouring countries. *Psal.* xxvii. 3. And the continuance of this branch of divine worship is nfirmed by the practice of our Lord, and the instructions of the postle. *Mat.* xxvi. 30. *Mark* xiv. 26. *Ephes.* v. 19. *Col.* iii. 16. See lso *Rev.* v. 9. xiv. 1, 2, 3. Psalm-singing is a part of Christian wor-ip, which ought to be supported, encouraged, and performed in the oft skilful and harmonious manner.

These are the books that were written before the founding of *Solomon's* emple.

CHAP. XXXI.

rom the Founding of SOLOMON's *Temple, till the Destruction of it by* NEBUCHADNEZZAR, 423 *Years.*

RULES for calculating and adjusting the Chronology of this Period.

THE Chronology is here carried on by the sacred Historians in a double series of succeeding kings; one in the kingdom of *udah*, the other in the kingdom of *Israel*; the year of the reign of very king of *Judah* being mentioned, in which any king of *Israel* egan his reign; and *vice versa*. Therefore,

I. To be able to form a true judgment of the Chronology, it is ne-essary that we draw up two columns, one of the kings of *Judah*, and ne other of the kings of *Israel*, in such manner, that the years of their everal reigns may be set exactly over-against each other; together with he texts which prove the order of succession, and the years of the seve-al reigns. Thus the two columns will be a check upon each other; nd the general rule will be,

II. So to adjust the corresponding numbers of years in both the co-umns, as that they may be reduced to a consistency. Otherwise, the alculation cannot be just and true. Here lies the difficulty; and in rder to surmount it some allowance must be made. As,

III. That Successors may be supposed sometimes to reign with their athers, when the consistency of the two lists of kings cannot otherwise e made out. Thus it is certain, that *Solomon* was anointed king by rder of his father *David*. 1 Kings i. 34. And *Jehoram* did begin o reign while his father *Jehoshaphat* was alive. 2 *Kings* viii. 16.

IV. The years of reigns is delivered in full sums, without taking otice of the odd parts of a year, either at the beginning, or at the end f a reign. Therefore, to bring the two lists to an agreement, it may rea-onably be supposed, that, for instance, 12 years (or the 12th year) are ut down, when only eleven complete years are intended. So 2 *Kings* viii. 9, 10, it is said, that *Salmaneser* laid siege to *Samaria* in the fourth year

year of *Hezekiah*'s reign, and, after a ſiege of three years, took it in the ſixth year of *Hezekiah*. Hence it appears, that the three years of the ſiege are not to be underſtood of three full years, but only of two ſuch years; the ſiege beginning in the middle, ſuppoſe, of *Hezekiah's* fourth year, continuing the whole fifth year, and ending in ſome part of the ſixth year. It is therefore plain that, according to the ſtyle of the ſacred hiſtorians, one whole year and two parts of two years, one before, and another after that year, may be called three years.

V. In a turbulent ſtate of things, an *inter-regnum* may be allowed, where conſiſtency cannot be preſerved without it.

VI. To find the year before Chriſt, (or before A. D.) in which any reign began, ſubtract the years of the preceding reign from that year before A. D. in which the preceding reign began. To find the year of the world, (or A. M.) ſubtract the year before A. D. from 4004, which is the A. M. in which our Lord was born, according to Archbiſhop USHER, who is generally followed by our Chronologers. Further, from 4714, the year of the *Julian Period*, correſponding to A. M. 4004, ſubtract the year before A. D. and it will give the year of the *Julian Period*. E. g. To know what year before A. D. *Jehoſhaphat* began to reign, ſubtract 41, the years of his father *Aſa*'s reign, from the year before A. D. 955, when *Aſa* began to reign, and the remainder will give 914, the year before A. D. when *Jehoſhaphat* began to reign. Subtract the year 914 from 4004, and it will give 3090, the A. M. of the ſame event. Subtract 914 from 4714, and it will give 3800, the year of the *Julian Period* when *Jehoſhaphat* began to reign.

From

From the Founding of SOLOMON's *Temple till the Deſtruction of it by* NEBUCHADNEZZAR, 423 Years.

Yrs. bef. A. D.	*Yrs. of Reigns*	*Kings of JUDAH*	*Proofs*	*Kings of ISRAEL*	*Yrs. of Reigns*	*Yrs. bef. A. D.*
1011	36	SOLOMON (*a*)	1 *Kin.* vi. 37, 38.			1011
975	17	REHOBOAM	—— xiv. 20, 21.	JEREBOAM I.	22	975
958	3	ABIJAM	—— xv. 2, 1.	18. (*b*)		958
955	41	ASA	—— xv. 10, 9.	20.		955
953		2	—— xv. 25.	NADAB (*c*)	1	953
952		3	—— xv. 28, 33	BAASHA (*d*)	23	952
929		26	—— xvi. 8.	ELAH (*e*)	1	929
928		27	—— xvi. 10, 15.	ZIMRI	7 *days*	928
928		27 (*f*)	—— xvi. 23.	OMRI (*g*)	11	928

(*a*) *Solomon* laid the foundation of the Temple in the 4th year of his reign; and after that year he reigned 36 years.
(*b*) 17th complete.
(*c*) *Nadab* reigned two parts of 2 years, which together made 1 year.
(*d*) The latter part of *Baaſha*'s firſt year is laid to *Nadab*'s ſecond year.
(*e*) Part of 2 years, or 1 complete.
(*f*) To preſerve a conſiſtency with the Chronology of the kings of *Iſrael*, we muſt ſuppoſe, that *Omri* reigned with *Tibni* 4 years, 1 *Kings* xvi. 21, 22, beginning in the 27th year of *Aſa*: that after *Tibni*'s death he reigned alone 8 years, or 7 complete, beginning at the 31ſt year of *Aſa*. For the text, 1 *Kings* xvi. 22, 23. may be read—*ſo Tibni died, and Omri reigned* alone *in the* 31ſt year of *Aſa king of Judah*. *Omri reigned* in all *twelve years: in Tirzah he reigned ſix years.*
(*g*) Eleven years complete. When it is ſaid that he reigned twelve years, part of a year is counted for a whole year.

Yrs. bef. A. D.	Yrs. of Reigns	Kings of JUDAH	Proofs	Kings of ISRAEL	Yrs. of Reigns	Yrs. bef. A. D.
917		38	1 *Kin.* xvi. 29.	AHAB (*b*)	20	917
914	25	JEHOSAPHAT	—— xxii. 42, 41.	4 (*i*)		914
910			—— xvii. 1.	[*Elijah* (*k*)]		910
904		[*Troy* taken (*l*)]				
897		17	—— xxii. 51.	AHAZIAH (*m*)	1	897
896		18	2 *Kin.* iii. 1.	JEHORAM (*n*)	11	896
896			[—— i. 17. ii. 1. &c. iii. 1	*Elijah* tranſlated, *Eliſha* ſucceeds him.]		896
889	4	JEHORAM (*o*)	—— viii. 16.	5		
885	1	AHAZIAH	—— viii. 26, 25.	12 (*p*)		885
884	6	ATHALIAH	—— xi. 3.	JEHU	28	884
			—— x. 36.			
878	40	JOASH (*q*)	—— xii. 1.	7 (*r*)		878
870		[*Heſiod* and *Homer* *]				
856		22 (*s*)	—— xiii. 1.	JEHOAHAZ	17	856

(*b*) *Ahab* reigned but twenty years complete. See the correſponding part of the oppoſite column.
(*i*) This was the third year complete.
(*k*) About this time *Elijah*, the Prophet, appeared.
(*l*) According to Sir ISAAC NEWTON.
(*m*) *Ahaziah* reigned one year with his father, and one year alone.
(*n*) Or *Joram*, he reigned eleven years complete.
(*o*) Or *Joram*. It is ſuppoſed he reigned four years with his father.
(*p*) Eleven years complete.
(*q*) Or *Jehoaſh*.
(*r*) The ſixth year complete.
* According to Sir ISAAC NEWTON.
(*s*) Twenty-ſecond complete.

A. D.	Reigns	JUDAH		ISRAEL	Reigns	A. D.
839		37 (*t*)	2 *Kin.* xiii. 10.	JEHOASH (*u*)	14	839
			—— xiii. 14.	[*Eliſhah dieth.*]		839
839	29	AMAZIAH	—— xiv. 2, 1.	2 (*x*)		839
825		15 (*y*)	—— xiv. 23.	JEROBOAM II.	41	825
812			—— xiv. 25.	[*Jonah* (*z*)]		812
810	52	AZARIAH (*a*)	—— xv. 2, 1.	27 (*b*)		
800		[*Joel* propheſied.]				

(*t*) The thirty-ſeventh of *Joaſh* of *Judah* is the year in which *Joaſh* of *Iſrael* began to reign with his father; with whom he is ſuppoſed to reign two years. But thoſe two years are not taken into the account, which muſt be reckoned from the fortieth, or thirty-ninth year complete, when *Joaſh* of *Iſrael* reigned alone.

(*u*) Or *Joaſh*. He reigned two years with his father, in all ſixteen years.

(*x*) Thoſe two years he reigned with his father; and therefore they are not taken in.

(*y*) Fourteen years complete.

(*z*) *Jonah*, in his younger days, perhaps about twenty-eight, might begin to propheſy about this time.

(*a*) Or *Uzziah*, 2 *Chron* xxvi. 1. *Iſai*. i. 1. vi. 1. *Amos* i. 1.

(*b*) *Amaziah* reigned twenty-nine years, namely, fourteen years before *Jeroboam* II. began to reign, and fifteen years after he began to reign. How then could his ſon *Azariah*, or *Uzziah*, ſucceed him in the twenty-ſeventh year of *Jeroboam* II, when *Jeroboam* had reigned but fifteen years when *Amaziah* died? *Anſ.* If *Azariah* was fixteen, in the twenty-ſeventh of *Jeroboam* (2 *Kings* xv. 2.) then he was born in the eleventh year of *Jeroboam*, and ſo was but a minor of four years old in the fifteenth of *Jeroboam*, when his father *Amaziah* died. It may therefore be ſuppoſed, that he was not inaugurated, or crowned king, till twelve years after, when he was ſixteen years of age, in the twenty-ſeventh of *Jeroboam*: the government, in the mean while, being in the hands of a regency. But to preſerve the truth of the Chronology, the twelve years of his minority are included in the fifty-two years which he is ſaid to have reigned; which twelve years are to be deducted out of the twenty-ſeven of *Jeroboam*'s reign; and ſo he will be conſidered as ſucceeding his father in the fifteenth year of *Jeroboam*. Thus all will ſtand right. As the regency governed and tutored the young king exeeeding well, the people were in no haſte to have him crowned.

Yrs. bef. A. D.	Yrs. of Reigns	Kings of JUDAH	Proofs	Kings of ISRAEL	Yrs. of Reigns	Yrs. bef. A. D.
			[*Amos* i. 1.	*Amos* propheſied.]		787
			[*Hoſea* i. 1.	*Hoſea* propheſied.]		785
784				Interregnum	11	784
773		38 (*c*)	2 *Kin.* xv. 8.	ZECHARIAH	6 *months*	773
772		39	—— xv. 13.	SHALLUM	1 *month*	772
772		39	—— xv. 17.	MENAHEM	10	772
				[*Jonah went to Nineveh.* (*d*)]		770
761		50	—— xv. 23.	PEKAIAH	2	762
759		52	—— xv. 27.	PEKAH	20	760
		[*Iſaiah* (*e*)	*Iſa.* i. 1. vi. 1.]			
758 (*f*)	16	JOTHAM	2 *Kin.* xv. 33, 32.	2		758
753		[*Micah* propheſied	*Micah* i. 1.]			
742	16	AHAZ	2 *Kin.* xvi. 2, 1.	17 (*g*)		742
						740

(*c*) Thirty-ſeven complete.

(*d*) About this time *Jonah*, advanced in years, might propheſy againſt *Nineveh*, in the reign of *Pul*, who ſoon after invaded the land of *Iſrael*, 2 *Kings* xv. 19; but it doth not appear, that he had any deſign to conquer it.

(*e*) About this time *Iſaiah* began to propheſy, *Iſai.* i. 1. and, it is ſuppoſed, continued to the latter end of *Hezekiah*'s reign.

(*f*) This number is found by ſubtracting 52, the years of *Azariah* or *Uzziah*'s reign, from 810, which is the year before Chriſt when he began to reign.

(*g*) Sixteen complete.

A. D.	Reigns	JUDAH		ISRAEL	Reigns	A. D.
740			[1 *Chron.* v. 26. 2 *Kin.* xv. 29.	I. Captivity of Iſrael by *Tiglath.* P.]		
738				Interregnum.	8	738
730		12	—— xvii. 1.	HOSEA.	9	730
726	29 (*b*)	HEZEKIAH	—— xviii. 2, 1.	3		726
721		6 (*i*)	—— xviii. 9, &c.	II. Iſrael carried into captivity. (*k*)		721
720		[*Nahum* propheſied.]				720
698	55	MANASSEH	—— xxi. 1.			
677		22	[—— xvii. 24. *Ezra* iv. 2.	III. Captivity of Iſrael by *Eſarhaddon* *]		
643	2	AMON	2 *Kin.* xxi. 19.			
641	3	JOSIAH	—— xxii. 1.			
628		[*Jeremiah* began. *Habakkuk*, *Zephaniah* (*l*)]	*Jer.* i. 2, 3. —— xxv. 3.			

(*b*) Twenty-eight complete.

(*i*) Five complete.

(*k*) King *Hoſheah* and his people, the ten tribes, were now carried into *Aſſyria* by *Shalmaneſer*, king of *Aſſyria*, who dwelt at *Nineveh*.

* See page 144 in the note.

(*l*) In this year *Jeremiah* began, and continued till the eleventh year of *Zedekiah*, *Jer.* i. 2, 3. *Habakkuk* and *Zephaniah* were probably cotemporaries with *Jeremiah*. See Dr PRIDEAUX's Connect. at the year before A. D. 609.

Yrs. bef. A. D.	*Yrs. of Reigns*	*Kings of JUDAH*	*Proofs*	*Kings of ISRAEL*
610	3 *months*	JEHOAHAZ (*m*)	2 *Kin.* xxiii. 31.	
610	11	JEHOIAKIM (*n*)	—— xxiii. 36.	
606		[*Daniel* carried to Babylon. (*o*)]	*Dan.* i. 1, 6.	I. Captivity of *JUDAH.*
603		[*Daniel* interprets *Nebuchadnezzar*'s dream.	—— ii. 1.]	
599	3 *months*	JEHOIACHIN (*p*)	2 *Kin.* xxiv. 8.	
599		[*Mordecai* and *Ezekiel* captives.	*Esth.* ii. 5, 6. *Ezek.* i. 1, 2.]	II. Captivity of *JUDAH.*
599	11	ZEDEKIAH	2 *Kin.* xxiv. 18.	
595		[*Ezekiel* had his first vision.	*Ezek.* i. 2.]	
588		The Temple was demolished.	2 *Kin.* xxv. 2, 9.	III. Captivity of *JUDAH,* and of the remains of *Israel.*
587	*Obadiah* propheſied againſt the *Edomites,* who cruelly aſſiſted in the deſtruction of *Jeruſalem.*			
569	*Nebuchadnezzar* diſtracted for 7 years together. *Dan.* iv.			
555	*Daniel* had his viſion of the 4 empires. *Dan.* vii.			

(*m*) Or *Shallum.* (*n*) Or *Eliakim,* 2 *Chron.* xxxvi. 4.

(*o*) Hence began the ſeventy years captivity, foretold by *Jeremiah,* chap. xxv. 1, 12. xxix. 10. *Dan.* ix. 2.

(*p*) Otherwiſe called *Coniah,* and *Jeconiah. Jer.* xxii. 24, &c. *Eſth.* ii. 6.

538 He interpreted the hand-writing on the wall, *Dan.* v. 25. and was caſt into the lion's den, *Dan.* vi.
536 *Cyrus* reſtores the Jews, and puts an end to their 70 years captivity. *Ezra* i. 1. See the year before A. D. 606.
Zerubbabel was then governor, and *Joſhua* high prieſt. *Ezra* iii. 2; 8 *Hag.* i. 1. *Zech.* iii. 1. iv. 6.
535 Jews begin to rebuild *Jeruſalem* and the temple. The *Samaritans* obſtruct them. *Ezra* iii. i, &c. iv. 1.
534 *Daniel*'s laſt viſion. *Dan.* x. 11, 12.
520 *Haggai* and *Zechariah* propheſy. *Ezra* v. 1. *Hag.* i. 1. *Zach.* i. 1.
515 The Temple rebuilt and dedicated. *Ezra* vi. 15, 16.
462 *Ahaſuerus*, alias *Artaxerxes*, divorces Vaſhti, and afterwards marries *Eſther*. Eſth. i. 1, &c. See Dr. PRIDEAUX's Connect. at the year before A. D. 465.
458 *Ezra* ſent to be governor of *Judea* by *Artaxerxes*. *Ezra* vii.
453 *Haman* plots the deſtruction of the Jews. *Eſth.* iii. 11.
445 *Nehemiah* ſent governor to *Judea*, and rebuilds the walls of *Jeruſalem*. *Neh.* ii. 1, &c.
444 *Ezra* is ſuppoſed to publiſh his edition of the Holy Scriptures.
433 *Nehemiah* goes from *Jeruſalem* to the *Perſian* court. *Neh.* v. 14. xiii. 6.
429 About this time *Malachi* propheſied, according to Dr. PRIDEAUX's Con. 428.
428 *Nehemiah* comes again to *Jeruſalem* with a new commiſſion. *Neh.* xiii. 6.
404 *Socrates* flouriſhed.
296 *Simon* the Juſt, high prieſt of the *Jews*.

CHAP. XXXII.

The moral Cauſes of the Babyloniſh CAPTIVITY; *and the Propriety of that Diſpenſation.*

THE whole *Jewiſh* nation, both *Judah* and *Iſrael*, had all along a ſtrong and ſtrange propenſity to idolatry, even after the erection of the temple, and the eſtabliſhing of the worſhip of God there, in the moſt grand and ſolemn manner. They erected *altars to ſtrange gods* frequented *high-places* and *groves* conſecrated to idolatrous worſhip, and furniſhed them with *idols* and *images* for that purpoſe. 2 *Chron.* xiv. 3. 1 *Kings* xv. 11, 12, 13. And their morals were juſt as corrupt as their religion, even to the degree of ſodomy itſelf. 1 *Kings* xv. 12.

What their peculiar temptations were, we know not. All the endeavours of good kings, and all the preaching of holy Prophets, ſent by ſpecial commiſſion from God, were ineffectual to produce a reformation. The pious king *Hezekiah* was zealous and active in rooting out idolatry: but *Manaſſeh*, his ſon and ſucceſſor, reſtored it again in the higheſt and moſt flagitious degree of profaneneſs and iniquity, even beyond that of the dark and ignorant nations. 2 *Kings* xxi. 1——10. *He built up again the high-places which Hezekiah his father had deſtroyed*, &c. He was alſo a grievous perſecutor of all that would not conform to his idolatrous eſtabliſhments, and ſo *ſhed innocent blood* very much. *Amon*, his ſon, followed his bad example. *Joſiah*, his grandſon, vigorouſly attempted a reformation. 2 *Kings* xxiii. 24, 25. But the people never came heartily into it. 2 *Chron.* xxxvi. 14, &c. *All the chief of the prieſts and the people tranſgreſſed very much, after all the abominations of the heathen, and polluted the houſe of the Lord, which he had hallowed in Jeruſalem. And the Lord God of their fathers ſent to them by his meſſengers, riſing up betimes, and ſending; becauſe he had compaſſion on his people, and on his dwelling-place; but they mocked the meſſengers of God, and deſpiſed his words, and miſuſed his Prophets, until the wrath of the Lord aroſe againſt his people, till there was no remedy. Therefore he brought upon them the king of the Chaldees, who ſlew their young men with the ſword, in the houſe of their ſanctuary, and had no compaſſion upon young man or maiden, old man, or him that ſtooped for age; he gave them all into his hand. And all the veſſels of the houſe of God, great and ſmall, and the treaſures of the houſe of the Lord, and the treaſures of the king, and of his princes; all theſe he brought to Babylon. And they burnt the houſe of God, and brake down the wall of Jeruſalem, and burnt all the palaces thereof with fire, and deſtroyed all the goodly veſſels thereof. And them that eſcaped from the ſword, carried he away to Babylon; where they were ſervants to him and his ſons, until the reign of the kingdom of Perſia.*

Obſerve——This dreadful calamity came upon them gradually. Firſt good king *Joſiah* was, in judgment upon the land, ſlain in battle by *Pharaoh-Necho*, 2 *Kings* xxiii. 29. who put *Jehoahaz* that ſucceeded him into chains, ſent him priſoner into *Egypt*, and put the land of *Judah* under a heav-

eavy tribute. 2 *Kings* xxiii. 33. *Jehoiakim* ſucceeded, a wicked prince ke his predeceſſors. In his third year, *Nebuchadnezzar* took *Jeruſalem*, nd carried away part of the veſſels of the houſe of God, and many of ne people into captivity. Particularly, he gave order to *Aſhpenaz the aſter of his eunuchs*, that he ſhould make choice out of the children of ne royal family, and of the nobility of the land, ſuch as he found to be f the faireſt countenance, and the quickeſt parts, to be carried to *Baylon*, and there made eunuchs in his palace, *Daniel* i. 1—4. whereby vas fulfilled *Iſaiah*'s prediction above an hundred years before. *Iſaiah* xxix. 7. Among theſe youths were *Daniel*, *Hananiah*, *Miſhael*, and *Azariah*. *Dan.* i. 6, 7. Moreover the king was made a tributary, and he whole land reduced into vaſſalage under the *Babylonians*. A ſevere iſitation, but had not the proper effect upon *Jehoiachin*, the next king, vho was as corrupt as his father. 2 *Kings* xxiv. 8, 9. He had been but hree months on the throne, when *Nebuchadnezzar* again beſieged and ook *Jeruſalem*, with the king and all the royal family; all the moſt vauable things in the temple, and in the king's treaſures, with all the nighty men of valour, all the craftſmen and ſmiths, he took away, leaing none in the land but the pooreſt ſort. 2 *Kings* xxiv. 12, 13, 14. Among the reſt, *Ezekiel* (chap. i. 1, 2.) and *Mordecai* (Eſth. ii. 5, 6.) vere now carried captives. Yet ſtill there was no amendment of the eligion or morals of the nation. *Zedekiah*, the next and laſt king, was s bad as his predeceſſors. 2 *Kin.* xxiv. 18, 19. And in about eleven ears, *Nebuchadnezzar*, after a long and cloſe ſiege, took *Jeruſalem*, brake lown its walls, burnt the city and temple, carried away all the ſacred itenſils, and all the people, except a few of the very pooreſt to till the ground, and reduced the whole land of *Judea*, in a manner, to utter deolation for the ſins thereof.

The propriety of this diſpenſation will appear, if we reflect,

I. That the lenity of God appeared in bringing this terrible overthrow upon them ſo gradually, after a ſucceſſion of judgments from leſs to greater, for the ſpace of twenty-two years; which ſhould have been a warning to them, and by experience have convinced them, that the threatenings denounced by the Prophets would certainly be executed.

II. That it was a juſt puniſhment of their ſins; particularly of their idolatry, whereby they forſook God, and therefore God juſtly forſook them, and delivered them into the hands of their enemies, as *Moſes* had foretold. *Lev.* xxvi. 30——36.

III. This dreadful calamity was the moſt effectual means to work their reformation, which was the end propoſed by the Divine Wiſdom. Now, in their captive, diſconſolate ſtate, they had time, and their calamities had a natural tendency to give them a diſpoſition, to reflect upon the long ſeries of iniquity and perverſeneſs which had brought them under the heavieſt of God's judgments. Now *their own wickedneſs corrected them, and their backſlidings reproved them*; *now they* muſt *know and ſee, that it was an evil thing and bitter, that they had forſaken the Lord their God, and that his fear had not been in them.* Iſaiah ii. 19. In the land of their Captivity the ſermons of the Prophets, declaiming with the higheſt authority againſt their profane and vicious practices, would be ſtill ſounding in their ears, and their abject, wretched condition, the conſequence of

ſuch practices, would ſink them deep into their hearts, and ſurely give them an utter deteſtation of what they very well knew was the cauſe of all their grievous ſufferings.

They had ſuffered themſelves to be ſhamefully infatuated by their falſe prophets, who had propheſied to them in *Baal*, as the moſt infallible oracle. *Jer.* ii. 8. They were prophets *of the deceit of their hearts*, xxiii. 26. They had encouraged a rabble of *diviners*, *dreamers*, *enchanters*, and *forcerers*, who had moſt impudently impoſed upon their credulity, aſſuring them, in the name of the Lord too, that they ſhould not ſerve the king of *Babylon*, Jer. xxvii. 9. xxviii. 4. xxix. 8, 9; that he ſhould not come againſt them, nor againſt the land, xxxvii. 19. They *belied the Lord, and ſaid, it is not He, neither ſhall evil come upon us; neither ſhall we ſee ſword* nor *famine*, Jer. v. 12. *but I will give you aſſured peace in this place.* xiv. 13. Thus they cauſed the people to err; and their kings, princes, and prieſts, concurred to ſtrengthen the deluſion. *Jer.* ii. 26. v. 31. xxxii. 32. By the way, theſe prophets and prieſts were men of very wicked lives. *Zeph.* iii. 4. *Jer.* xxiii. 11. They *committed adultery*, *walked in lies*, *ſtrengthened the hands of evil doers*, and prevented their *returning from wickedneſs*, Jer. xxiii. 14; they perſecuted and murdered the juſt, in the midſt of *Jeruſalem*. *Lam.* iv. 13. From them *profaneneſs went forth into all the land*, *Jer.* xxiii. 15. which by their means was *become full of adulterers*, and *mourned because of ſwearing*, verſe 10. See a more particular deſcription of the wickedneſs of the land, *Ezek.* xxii. 6—13.

But now, where were all their falſe prophets, with all their bold pretenſions, and flattering promiſes? The deluſion is now quite at an end, and they find themſelves moſt miſerably deceived. Their eyes are opened, and they are thoroughly convinced they were a ſet of the vileſt impoſtors, who had deluded them into the moſt wretched circumſtances. *The prophets* were now *become wind*, Jer. v. 13. *an everlaſting reproach*, *a perpetual ſhame*, *which* could not *be forgotten*, xxiii. 40. And in proportion as theſe deceivers were deteſted, the true Prophets, who would have drawn them to juſt regards of God and his holy law, would be eſteemed and honoured.

Doubtleſs the lying prophets and prieſts had filled their heads with ſpecious pretences for their idolatrous practices; and aſſured them, they were ſtill the beloved people of God, inveſted in all the diſtinguiſhing privileges of his church and peculiar people, and ſecure under his protection; with great oſtentation and confidence crying out, *The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, are theſe* [men or buildings] *Jer.* vii. 4. But now they found all their ſophiſtry to be lying words, and could no longer take aſſurance from their peculiar privileges, or their magnificent temple, when their temple and city were both deſtroyed, and themſelves caſt out into an heathen land, where they were ſo long, and ſo ſhamefully ſtripped of all their peculiar honours. In ſhort, no method could have been deviſed more proper to give this people a fixed deteſtation of idolatry, and the vile arts by which they were ſeduced into it. And it had this effect. They never more fell into idolatry, but retain the greateſt abhorrence of it unto this day.

IV. The law of God, written by *Moſes*, as the rule of their conduct in all affairs civil and religious, and the ground of their happineſs, they had

ſo

far neglected, that once it was almoſt unknown and loſt among them. *Kings* xxii. 8—12. This contempt of the divine law, the Prophets d frequently and ſtrongly proteſted againſt, (*Iſai.* v. 24. xxx. 9. *Jer.* 19. viii. 8. ix. 13. *Hoſ.* viii. 12. *Amos* ii. 4. and in other places) d publicly declared that it would be their ruin. And in their ruined te, this muſt be remembered, as the primary reaſon of all their ſuffer-gs; and they muſt be thoroughly ſenſible, that a due regard to the v of God, was the only way to recover his favour, and their own pro-erity; and accordingly muſt be diſpoſed to be attentive to it. For *zra*, after the captivity, found ſo little difficulty in introducing the pub-reading of the law, that the people themſelves called for it. *Neh.* i. 1, 2, 3, 4, 18. xiii. 1. *Ezra* was a ready writer of the law of God, *zra* vii. 6, 10, 11, 12, and active in propagating the knowledge of it. oubtleſs he wrote, or directed to be written, ſeveral copies of the law, be diſperſed into proper hands. And whereas before the Captivity ey had no ſynagogues for public worſhip or inſtruction, nor any places reſort to for either, unleſs the temple at *Jeruſalem*, or the cities of the *evites*, or to the Prophets, when God was pleaſed to ſend them; thus norance grew among the people; but after the Captivity ſynagogues ere erected among them in every city, where the law was read every bbath, and other acts of devotion performed. This was the moſt ef-ctual method of preſerving the knowledge of God and his law, and a nſe of their duty. This was another good effect of this diſpenſation, nd may juſtly be given as one good reaſon of their being ſo ſtrongly xed againſt idolatry, ever after the *Babyloniſh* Captivity.

V. This diſpenſation was alſo calculated to produce good effects among e nations whither they were carried into captivity. For wherever they ere diſperſed in the eaſtern countries, they would bring with them the nowledge of the true God, now ſeriouſly impreſſed upon their hearts. ut Divine Providence, by ſuch ſignal circumſtances of his interpoſi-on, as were publiſhed and known over all the vaſt extent of the eaſtern npires, raiſed ſome of the captive *Jews* to the higheſt poſts of dignity nd power in the courts of *Aſſyria* and *Perſia*. *Dan.* i. 19, 20. Inſomuch rat the moſt haughty monarchs openly confeſſed the living and true God, s the only and ſupreme God, *Dan.* ii. 47, 48, 49. iv. 34, *&c.* and nade decrees, that were publiſhed throughout their ſpacious dominions, n favour of the profeſſion and worſhip of him, *Dan.* iii. 29. vi. 25, *&c.* And the affair of queen *Eſther* and *Mordecai*, and the decree of the em-eror *Ahaſuerus*, in favour of all the *Jews* in his empire, conſiſting of 127 rovinces, muſt, not only give the *Jews* every where great diſtinction nd honour, but alſo render the great God more known, and his religion nore reſpectable; inſomuch that many of the people of the land, many f the *Perſians*, became *Jews*, or proſelytes to the Jewiſh religion. *Eſther* iii. 11, *&c.* And the great CYRUS was ſo well acquainted with the rue God, that, as one of his firſt acts, after he was advanced to the mpire of *Perſia*, he made a decree for the return of the *Jews* into their wn country, and for the rebuilding the temple. *Ezra* i. 1—5. From ll this it is clear, that the *Jews*, notwithſtanding their depravity in their wn country, during the Captivity of 70 years, muſt have been a burn-ng and a ſhining light all over the eaſtern countries. And thus, in this

this dispensation also, God, the Father and Governor of mankind, wa working for the reformation and improvement of the world, in tha which is the true excellency of their nature, and the only foundation o their happiness.

CHAP. XXXIII.

Authors within the PERIOD *from the Building to the Destruction of th* TEMPLE.

LITERATURE in this Period received a considerable advance; probably, by means of the schools of the Prophets.

Solomon was a great author, as he was endowed with an uncommon share of wisdom. For *he spake three thousand proverbs, and his songs were a thousand and five. And he spake of trees, from the cedar that is in Lebanon, even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall; he spake also of beasts, and of fowl, and of creeping things, and of fishes.* But of all his works only three are taken into the Sacred Canon, namely, *Proverbs*, *Ecclesiastes*, and his *Song*.

PROVERBS.

THIS Book consisteth of the most useful rules for the right direction of life in religion and morals, and is the most authentic and excellent of the kind that can be produced in antiquity. It may be divided into five parts. I. In the first part the tutor gives his pupil admonitions, directions, cautions, and excitements to the study of wisdom. *Chap.* first to the tenth. II. The second contains the Proverbs of *Solomon*, properly so called, delivered in distinct, independent, general sentences. *Chap.* 10th to the 22d, *ver.* 17. III. The third part begins at *chap.* xxii. 17. where the tutor again addresseth himself to his pupil, and gives him fresh admonitions to the diligent study of wisdom; which is followed by a set of instructions delivered in the imperative mood to the pupil, who is supposed all the while to be standing before him. *Chap.* xxii. 17. to *chap.* xxv. IV. The fourth part is distinguished by its being a collection of *Solomon*'s Proverbs, selected, we may suppose, out of a much greater number, by the men of *Hezekiah*; perhaps, by the Prophets *Isaiah*, *Hosea*, *Micah*, who all flourished in the days of *Hezekiah*, and not improbably assisted him in his pious endeavours to restore true religion. 2 *Chron.* xxxi. 20, 21. This part, as the second, consists chiefly of distinct, unconnected sentences, and reacheth from *chap.* xxv. to *chap.* xxx. V. The fifth part contains a set of wise observations and instructions, which *Agur*,

gur, the ſon of *Jakeh*, delivered to his pupils, *Ithiel* and *Ucal*, chap. xx. And the xxxiſt chapter contains the precepts which his mother, oſſibly a *Jewiſh* woman married to ſome neighbouring prince, delivered o *Lemuel*, her ſon; being paſſionately ſolicitous to guard him againſt ice, to eſtabliſh him in the principles of juſtice, and to have him mar-ed to a wife of the beſt qualities. Theſe two chapters are a kind of ppendix to the Book of *Proverbs*. Note——It is uncertain who *Agur* nd the mother of *Lemuel* were.

ECCLESIASTES.

THIS Book was written by the *Preacher*, the ſon of *David*, *king* of *Je-uſalem*, chap. i. 1; that is to ſay, by *Solomon*, (probably in the latter art of his life) as appears from *chap.* i. 16. ii. 4, *&c.* The ſubject of t is, an inquiry into the chief good or happineſs of man, in this world. And,

I. He confutes the falſe opinion of thoſe that place happineſs in hu-nan wiſdom, or philoſophy; in the pleaſures, amuſements, or ſplendor f life; in honour, magiſtracy, and dominion; in riches or wealth. This, n the ſix firſt chapters. II. He teaches, that true felicity is to be found nly in a ſerious regard to God and religion, in the ſix laſt chapters. In oth parts he intermixes ſeveral incidental reflections, which are of uſe o make us wiſe and pious. The whole is adapted to draw us from the nordinate purſuit of earthly things, and from a wrong to a lawful uſe f them, without any offence to God, or damage to ourſelves, till we rrive at a never-dying felicity.

The SONG of SOLOMON.

THE *Song of Songs*, or the moſt excellent Song, was compoſed by *Solo-mon*; and is a noble *epithalamium*, or marriage ſong, of the paſtoral kind, embelliſhed with the moſt grand and beautiful images. In the let-ter it is allowed to be a celebration of the marriage of *Solomon* to *Pha-raoh*'s daughter; but the *Jewiſh* rabbies, and many of the Chriſtian fa-thers, have underſtood it as a ſpiritual allegory, repreſenting the love of God, or, as Chriſtians ſay, of Chriſt, to his church; which, in other parts of Scripture, is repreſented as his ſpouſe, *Pſalm* xlv. 10, *&c.* *Hearken, O Daughter, and conſider*, &c. Ver. 13. *The king's daughter is all glorious within*, &c. Which Pſalm *David* is ſuppoſed to have made upon the ſame occaſion, namely, at *Solomon*'s marriage; wherein, as the bride-groom is juſtly ſuppoſed to be Chriſt, *ver.* 3——8. ſo his bride may well be ſuppoſed to be the church. *John* Baptiſt compares Chriſt to a bridegroom, *John* iii. 28, 29; and ſo doth our Lord himſelf, *Mat.* ix. 15. xxv. 1. and the kingdom of heaven he compares to a ſumptuous marriage feaſt, *Mat.* xxii. 2. So alſo *Rev.* xix. 7. xxi. 2. the mar-riage of the Lamb to his bride, or wife, clothed in fine linen, (which doubtleſs repreſents the Chriſtian church in a ſtate of purity) is ſpoken of. And St. *Paul*, in ſtrong terms, ſuch as *Adam* uſed when he was mar-ried

ried to *Eve*, represents Christ as a husband to the church. *Ephes.* v. 25. *&c.* And so also, 2 *Cor.* xi. 2. *I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.* And frequently in the Prophets God is set forth as the husband or bridegroom to the church. *Isai.* liv. 5. lxi. 10. lxii. 4, 5. *Jer.* iii. 20. xxxi. 32. *Hos.* ii. 2, 7, 16, 19. Hence, apostacy from God is very commonly represented as whoredom and adultery, both in the Old and New Testament.

All this is very just, and supplieth very instructive and comfortable meditation. And it is certainly the best use we can make of this elegant Song to apply it thus to spiritual purposes. But the ideas, which the Scripture gives us of God's or Christ's relation to the church, as a husband, are too general, to serve as a key to the great variety of particulars in this poem; which therefore, as it is never quoted in any other part of the Scripture, can be reduced to no certain rule of interpretation, but must be left to every person's fancy or imagination. Bp. PATRICK has done, perhaps, as much as can be done upon the spiritualizing scheme.

Within this Period were also written the Prophecies of *Joel*, *Amos*, *Hosea*, *Jonah*, *Isaiah*, *Micah*, *Nahum*, *Jeremiah*, *Habakkuk*, *Zephaniah*, *Obadiah*. These before the Captivity. During the 70 years Captivity, *Lamentations*, *Ezekiel*, *Daniel*, *Esther*. After the Captivity, *Ezra*, *Nehemiah*, *Haggai*, *Zechariah*, *Malachi*, I. and II. *Chronicles*. These complete the Canon of the Old Testament. And whereas it is of great use to the right understanding of the Prophets, to know the reigns and times in which they prophesied, and the particular occasions upon which any of them delivered their prophecies, I shall now attempt to digest and range them in chronological order, as follows.

CHAP. XXXIV.

PROPHETS *before the* CAPTIVITY.

ABOUT twenty-six years after the death of *Elisha*, the Prophet, (2 *Kings* xiii. 20.) *Jonah the son of Amittai, the Prophet, which was of Gath-heper*, was sent by God with a message of encouragement and success to *Jeroboam* II. king of *Israel*. 2 Kings xiv. 25. This might happen when *Jonah* was about 28 years of age.

JOEL i. ii. iii.

JOEL at *Jerusalem* (Joel ii. 1, 15, 17.) might prophesy before *Amos* at *Samaria*, Amos i. 1. iv. 1. For *Amos*, chap. iv. 7, 9. may refer to the devastation

vaſtation by *palmer-worms*, &c. and drought, which *Joel* predicted, ap. i. 6, 7, 19, 20. However, as the ſenſe of this propheſy, in no part, at I know of, depends upon the time when it was delivered, there can no harm in ſuppoſing that *Joel* propheſied about this time.

AMOS i.—ix.

Some time after *Joel*, *Amos* might begin to propheſy in the kingdom *Iſrael*. Certainly de did propheſy in thoſe days of *Uzziah* or *Azariah* ng of *Judah*, and of *Jeroboam* II. king of *Iſrael*, in which they were temporaries, *chap.* i. 1. How long he continued, is not intimated. He id no regular education in the ſchools of the Prophets, (which ſuppoſeth at other Prophets had) but was originally a herdſman, and a *gatherer ſycamore fruit*, or wild figs, *chap.* vii. 14. He had an expreſs commiſ- on from God to propheſy unto his people *Iſrael*, ver. 15. This book ay conſiſt of ſeveral diſtinct diſcourſes; but, as they are without date, e cannot aſſign the particular times when they were delivered.

HOSEA i. ii. iii.

Hosea is juſtly ſuppoſed to be cotemporary with *Amos*. He prophe- ed againſt the ten tribes, or the kingdom of *Iſrael*, beginning in the reign *Jeroboam* II. and propheſying in the reigns of *Uzziah*, *Jotham*, *Ahaz*, nd *Hezekiah*, kings of *Judah*. He predicted the Captivity of the ten ibes; and as that Captivity happened in the ſixth year of *Hezekiah*, robably he lived to ſee it accompliſhed by *Shalmaneſer* king of *Aſſyria*; hich was done about 64 years after the commencement of his prophetic fice.

This Prophet is commanded to *take unto* him *a wife of whoredoms, and ildren of whoredoms*, chap. i. 2. This might all be tranſacted in a vi- on, in the *council of God*. See the eighth, ninth, tenth, and eleventh apters of *Ezekiel*. Or it might be a parable, to be ſpoken as ſuch to e children of *Iſrael*. See *Ezek.* xxiv. 3, *&c.* Here that is ordered to done as a fact, which was only to be ſpoken as a parable. But if the rophet did really marry a lewd woman, who had children, not by him, ut by ſome other man, this was no ſin in him, who did it by Divine ommand, in order to explain to the *Iſraelites* their wickedneſs, and the uniſhment of it. The adulterous wife repreſented the *Iſraelites*, who their idolatries had gone a whoring from God, their own Huſband. he children which this woman bare, are the ruinous effects of the olatry of the children of *Iſrael*. The firſt baſtard was called *Jezreel*; and enoted the vengeance which God would take upon the houſe of *Jehu*, r the blood which he ſhed in *Jezreel*, chap. i. 4. The ſecond was lled *Lo-ruhamah*, ver. 6. to denote that God would no longer ſpare the ouſe of *Iſrael*, but take them quite away out of their land. The name the third was *Lo-ammi*, ver. 9. which ſignified that the relation be- veen God and the *Iſraelites* was diſſolved.

HOSEA iv.

THE *interregnum* in *Iſrael*, preceding the reign of *Zechariah*, was doubtleſs a time of very great diſorder and violence, and of much bloody ſtrife for the crown. Probably, *Zechariah* gained it by cutting off competitors. *Shallum* ſlew him, *Menahem* ſlew *Shallum*, and all within the ſpace of ſeven months. To this ſad ſtate of things *Hoſea* may well be ſuppoſed to refer, *chap.* iv. 2. *By ſwearing and lying, and killing and ſtealing, and committing adultery, they break out, and blood toucheth* [reacheth unto] *blood.* Here, therefore, we may place the fourth chapter of *Hoſea.*

JONAH i, ii, iii, iv.

JONAH, I ſuppoſe, about the ſecond year of *Menahem*, king of *Iſrael*, and about the 70th year of his age, was ſent to cry againſt *Nineveh*, about 700 miles from *Gath-heper*, then a great, wealthy, populous and haughty city, the chief ſeat of the *Aſſyrian* empire, aud the miſtreſs of the world; which had long been remarkable for luxury and jollity to a proverb, χρεισων Νινε ευφραινεσης, *better than merry Nineveh.* By *Zephaniah* it is called, *the rejoicing*, or joyous, *city*, chap. ii. 15. To be ſent with a meſſage of divine wrath to ſuch a place as this, could not but ſeem a frightful and dangerous errand to *Jonah.* He ſaw how much the *Iſraelites*, God's own people, hated and perſecuted the Prophets, who reproved and threatened them. What then could he expect from that great and wicked city, *Nineveh*, the head-quarters of pride and ſin? Further, he knew the Prophets very much hazarded their reputation in the world, when employed in denouncing judgments; becauſe God, being gracious, was ſlow in executing them. On this account, the Prophets at *Bethel* and *Jeruſalem* were vilely abuſed and decried by inſolent and rude infidels, who durſt even profeſs to *deſire*, or long for, *the day of the Lord*, (Amos v. 18.) in a confident perſuaſion that it would never come; and dared to challenge God to haſten his work. *Iſai.* v. 19. See alſo *Jer.* xvii. 15. *Ezekiel* xii. 22. And if this ſhould be *Jonah*'s caſe at *Nineveh*, what could he expect but to be torn in pieces for an impoſtor? How muſt he, and the religion he profeſſed, be expoſed to public contempt and ſcorn! This was what he particularly dreaded, *chap.* iv. 2. He was therefore reſolved *to flee from the preſence of* [from before] *Jehovah*; that is, I ſuppoſe, to run away from the *Council* of God in the land of *Iſrael*, to ſome remote country beyond ſea*, where, he thought, it was never held. But he was ſtopped by a miracle, and at length obliged to deliver the doleful meſſage, *Yet forty days and* impenitent *Nineveh ſhall be overthrown.* Convinced of his miraculous miſſion, § the king proclaimed a faſt,

* Note—*Tarſhiſh* may ſignify any remote country beyond ſea, as the *Indies* now with us. See Root 1827. in the Eng. Heb. Concordance.

§ *Luke* xi. 30.

and enjoined all the usual forms of repentance; *And God repented e evil which he had said he would do unto them.*

is very probable, that the idolatrous priests, and the astrologers, hsayers, and magicians, who must be numerous at *Nineveh*, as well t *Babylon*, (*Isai.* xlvii. 13. *Dan.* ii. 2.) would zealously endeavour ivert the king, when the first fright was over, from attending to a age from *Jehovah*, as soon as ever they possibly could, before the y days were expired. They would naturally represent *Jonah* to the g and all the people, as an impostor; and bear them in hand that the liction was false, and would not be fulfilled. This must give the phet, who was zealous for the glory of the God of *Israel*, very great asiness; insomuch that he wished for death, *chap.* iv. 2, 3; as *Eli-* in a case somewhat similar, had done before him, 1 *Kings* xix. 4. The question of *Jehovah*, Jon. iv. 4. which we render, *Dost thou well e angry?* should have been rendered, *Art thou very much grieved?* d so *ver.* 9. See *Heb. Eng. Concordance.* R. 748, 637.

Pul, the king of *Assyria*, who came against the land of *Israel* in the n of *Menahem*, 2 Kings xv. 19. is supposed by Archbishop USHER e the king of *Nineveh*, to whom *Jonah* was sent. As it appears n the history, that *Pul* had no design to make conquest of the land of *el*, I can assign no reason why he should reach his arm over the gdom of *Syria*, which lay to the extent of about three hundred miles, veen his dominions, and the land of *Canaan*, to strike at *Israel*, but he did it in revenge for the supposed insult which *Jonah* had red to him and his people.

ISAIAH vi. ii. iii. iv. v.

SAIAH, the brightest luminary of the *Jewish* church, justly called evangelical Prophet, he speaks so much and so clearly of *Christ*, an to prophesy in the year king *Uzziah* died, *chap.* vi. 1. and prophe- in *Judah* in the successive reigns of *Jotham*, *Ahaz*, and *Hezekiah*. was certainly alive and prophesied when *Merodachbaladen* sent his assy to *Hezekiah*, who had been sick, in the 14th year of *Hezekiah*, before Christ 714. Thus we certainly know that he prophesied ears. There is an ancient and probable tradition among the *Jews*, that uffered martyrdom under *Manasseh*, in the first year of his reign, re Christ 698, by being cruelly sawn asunder; to which the Apostle, . xi. 37. is generally thought to have respect. And then he must e continued 61 years. See PIERCE upon *Heb.* xi. 37.

The first chapter, by reason of the grand exordium, might be judged per to stand at the front of the book; but it gives such an account of distressed, desolate condition of the land of *Judah*, as agrees much er with the wicked and afflicted reign of the apostate *Ahaz*, than the flourishing circumstances of the country in the reigns of *Uz-*, and of his son and successor *Jotham*, who were both, in the main, l princes. Compare *Isai.* i. 7, 8, 9. with 2 *Chron.* xxvi. 1——16. the whole 27th chapter. But the second, third, fourth, and fifth pters of this prophecy, do describe, and exactly correspond to, a state

of

of national wealth and prosperity, which are usually attended with pride arrogance, and luxury. See *chap.* ii. 6—18. iii. 16—25. v. 8, 11, 12.

Therefore, I take this to be the order of those chapters. In the sixth chapter, and in the year before Christ 759, the Prophet, in the council of God, received his commission; and soon after delivered the contents of the second, third, fourth, and fifth chapters. And these chapters contain all that remains of his prophecies in the reigns of *Uzziah* and *Jotham*, for about the space of 16 years, till the first year of king *Ahaz*.

MICAH i, ii.

THESE two chapters were delivered before the destruction of *Samaria* which is here predicted, *chap.* i. 6. in the reign of *Jotham*, chap. i. 1 and therefore may be rightly placed about this time.

ISAIAH vii.

IN the first year of *Ahaz* king of *Judah*, *Rezin* king of *Syria*, and *Peka* king of *Israel*, formed a design of dethroning *Ahaz*, and of extirpating the family of *David*, by setting up the son of *Tabeal*, some potent, factious *Jew*, to be king of *Judah*; and therefore, having no design upon the nation, but only upon the royal family, marched directly to *Jerusalem* and laid close siege to it. But as it was the will of God, not to extirpate the family of *David*, but only to punish wicked *Ahaz*, he sent *Isaiah* to encourage him to make a vigorous defence, and to assure him they should not prevail against him, and that the house of *David* should subsist till the *Messiah* was born. Then was the prophecy delivered to *Ahaz* contained in the seventh chapter of *Isaiah* *.

ISAIAH viii, ix, x. to the fifth Verse.

AHAZ, a wicked idolator, paid little regard to what *Isaiah* had spoken to him in the name of the Lord. Therefore God ordered *Isaiah* to take a larg

* ISAI. vii. 8. *Within 65 years Ephraim shall be broken, that it be not a people.* This was predicted in the first year of *Ahaz*. *Ahaz* reigned 16 years and in the sixth year of his successor, *Hezekiah*, *Shalmaneser took Samaria, and carried away Israel* [Ephraim] *unto Assyria.* This makes but 16 and 5, or 21 years. How then shall we make out 65 years? This has very much puzzled the critics. But observe, probably *Israel*, or *Ephraim*, was carried into captivity by the *Assyrians* three times. I. By *Tiglath-Pileser*, 1 Chron. v. 26. 2 *Kings* xv. 29. II. By his son *Shalmaneser*, 2 *Kings* xvii. 6. xviii. 10, 11. Thus *Ephraim* was no more a *kingdom.* III. Probably by *Esarhaddon* who finally carried away all the remains of the people; which is implied in his bringing new inhabitants from *Babylon*, *Cuthah*, &c. 2 *Kings* xvii. 24. *Ezra* iv. 2. Thus *Ephraim* was no more a *people.* This happened in the 22d year of *Manasseh*, 65 years from the first of *Ahaz*. See Dr. PRIDEAUX *Con. ad an.* 677.

rge roll of parchment, and therein, with the *pen of a man*, i. e. in the nmon and moſt legible way of writing, to put down and publiſh, what d ſhould further diſcover about the preſent deliverance and future ca- ities of *Judah*. The roll was to be a comment upon the name of a which was then born to the Prophet, and by Divine Protection was led *Maher-ſha-lal-haſh-baz*, i. e. *make ſpeed to the ſpoil, and haſten to prey*; denoting the ſpeedy deſtruction of the two confederate kings *Samaria* and *Damaſcus*. This roll, I ſuppoſe, takes in the eighth and th chapters of *Iſaiah*, and the five firſt verſes of the 10th chapter.

ISAIAH xvii.

THIS chapter relates to the ſame ſubject, the deſtruction of *Iſrael* and *maſcus*; and therefore, I judge, it was delivered in the ſame year, er the roll was finiſhed. For in about two years after, *Tiglath-pileſer*, g of *Aſſyria*, took *Damaſcus*, and carried the people therein captive *Kir*. 2 Kings xvi. 9.

ISAIAH i.

PEKAH and *Rezin* failing in their attempt upon *Jeruſalem*, (2 Kings i. 5. *Iſai*. vii. 1.) the next year, 741, they returned with forces bet- appointed, and councils better concerted; and dividing themſelves o three armies, one under *Pekah*, another under *Rezin*, and a third der *Zichri*, *a mighty man of Ephraim*, they fell upon the country in ee different parts, making every where terrible havock and ſlaughter, d carrying away a prodigious number of captives. See 2 *Chron*. xxviii. -9. And no ſooner was the land freed from thoſe enemies, but it s invaded by the *Edomites*, on the ſouth, and the *Philiſtines*, on the ſt, who treated it with the ſame cruelty, ſlaying, plundering, and rrying away captives. 1 *Chron*. xxviii. 17, 18, 19. Thus was *Judah* evouſly diſtreſſed all over the country, and brought exceeding low, ich lately had been high in wealth and power, becauſe they and their ng had forſaken the Lord their God. And upon this occaſion, moſt obably, *Iſaiah* delivered the prophetic ſermon contained in the firſt apter, as it is very ſuitable to the ſtate of the nation at that time.

ISAIAH xxviii.

THIS chapter, relating to the deſtruction of *Ephraim*, or the ten bes, without any mention of *Syria* or *Damaſcus*, lieth between the de- uction of *Damaſcus*, 740, and the captivity of the ten tribes, 721.

HOSEA v. vi.

AHAZ, greatly diſtreſſed by *Pekah*, *Rezin*, &c. called in *Tiglath-pile-* , king of *Aſſyria*, to his help, 2 *Kings* xvi. 7. 2 *Chron*. xxviii. 16.

And *Menahem*, king of *Iſrael*, about 30 years before that, had hired *Pul* king of *Aſſyria*, to confirm the kingdom in his hand, 2 *Kings* xv. 19 though they reaped no benefit from them. Theſe are the only time in which the kings of *Judah* and *Iſrael* applied to the *Aſſyrian* for aſſiſtance. And whereas *Hoſea*, chap. v. 13. mentions both thoſe applications, the fifth and ſixth chapters muſt be taken in after *Ahaz* had applied to *Tiglath-pileſer*.

ISAIAH xiv. 28, &c.

THE *Philiſtines* triumphed over *Iſrael* all the days of *Ahaz*. But in the year *Ahaz* died, *Iſaiah* delivered the *burden*, or meſſage, relating to them, *chap.* xiv. 28, &c. which was fulfilled by *Hezekiah*, ſon and ſucceſſor to *Ahaz*. 2 Kings xviii. 8.

ISAIAH xv. xvi.

THE *Moabites* had not uſed the *Iſraelites* well, who fled for ſhelter from the ravages of *Pekah* and *Rezin*. With this inhumanity they are ironically upbraided, *Iſai.* xvi. 3. 4. But now they are told, the oppreſſor and ſpoiler were ceaſed, and the throne of *Hezekiah* ſhould *be eſtabliſhed in mercy, and he ſhould ſit upon it in truth*, &c. Therefore, this prophecy againſt *Moab* muſt have been delivered about the beginning (perhaps in the ſecond year) of *Hezekiah*'s reign. And Dr. PRIDEAUX ſuppoſeth it was accompliſhed by *Shalmaneſer*, three or four years after, when, as he thinks, *Shalmaneſer*, previouſly to the ſiege of *Samaria*, ſubdued the *Moabites*, to prevent any incurſions, or attacks, from that quarter.

HOSEA vii—xiv.

THE prophecies in theſe chapters were delivered (1.) after *Ephraim*, or the king of *Iſrael*, had called to *Egypt* for ſuccour, *chap.* vii. 11. xii. 1. as *Menahem* had done before to *Aſſyria*. 2 Kings xv. 19. But the only time they applied to *Egypt* was, when king *Hoſhea*, revolting from *Shalmaneſer*, ſent meſſengers to *So* king of *Egypt*. 2 Kings xvii. 4. Which occaſioned *Shalmaneſer*'s beſieging of *Samaria*, and carrying the ten tribes into captivity. And therefore theſe chapters might be delivered about three years before that event. (2.) Theſe prophecies were delivered after the firſt year of *Shalman*, or *Shalmaneſer*, who, according to Dr. PRIDEAUX, began to reign in the year before Chriſt 728, or 729. For the Prophet *Hoſea* refers to the deſtruction of *Beth-arbel* by *Shalmun*, chap. x. 14. And they were delivered before the taking of *Samaria*, which was in the 8th year of *Shalmaneſer*, before Chriſt 721; for the Prophet evidently, in thoſe chapters, ſuppoſeth, that *Ephraim*, or the ten tribes, were not yet carried into captivity. Therefore, they were delivered after the deſtruction of *Beth-arbel*, and before the captivity of the ten tribes, about the time above noted.

MICAH

MICAH iii, iv, v, vi, vii.

THE laſt verſe of the third chapter of *Micah* was uttered in the time *Hezekiah*, Jer. xxvi. 18; and here may both that chapter, and all at follow it, be placed, as propheſied in ſome time of *Hezekiah*'s firſt 3 years, before *Sennacherib* beſieged *Jeruſalem*. For the Prophet ſeems ſpeak of that ſiege and *Sennacherib*'s blaſphemy, chap. v. 1, 5. He eaketh glorious things of *Chriſt* and his kingdom, and nameth the very wn where he ſhould be born, chap. v. 2. In chapter iv. 1, 2, 3, he ſeth the very words of *Iſaiah*, chap. ii. 2, 3, 4, to expreſs the conflux the kingdom of *Chriſt*, his power in it, and the peace which, at ngth, it ſhould give to the world.

NAHUM i, ii, iii.

AFTER *Shalmaneſer*, king of *Nineveh*, had taken *Samaria*, and carried e ten tribes captive, *Nahum* might predict the ruin of *Nineveh*, then e capital of the *Aſſyrian* empire.

ISAIAH xxiii.

SHALMANESER, having taken *Samaria*, turned his arms againſt the ty of *Tyre*, which held out againſt him five years, and then was deli- ered from the ſiege by the death of *Shalmaneſer*. By this ſucceſs they ere too much elated, and growing very inſolent, this occaſioned the ophecy againſt them in this chapter; which foretels the miſerable erthrow of *Tyre*, which was effected by *Nebuchadnezzar*, king of *Ba- lon*. See Dr. PRIDEAUX's *Con.* An. 715, 720.

ISAIAH xxiv, xxv, xxvi, xxvii.

THESE chapters may refer to the final deſolation of *Judea* and *Jeru- lem* by *Nebuchadnezzar*; but I can diſcover no marks of the time when ey were delivered. However, with the threatenings he mixes many acious promiſes and comforts. See Dr. LIGHTFOOT.

ISAIAH xxxviii, xxxix.

IN this year king *Hezekiah* fell ſick, and the other affairs happened, hich are recorded in this chapter: for 15 years are added to *Hezekiah*'s e, chap. xxxviii. 5. and as he reigned in all 29 years, this muſt have en the 14th year of his reign. And that it happened when the inten- ons of *Sennacherib*, king of *Aſſyria*, to attack *Jeruſalem* were known, pears from *Iſaiah* xxxviii. 6.

ISAIAH xxix, xxx, xxxi, xxxii, xxxiii, xxxiv, xxxv.

HEZEKIAH, having refuſed to pay the annual tribute to the king of *Aſſyria*, towards the end of the 14th year, *Sennacherib* coming upon him with a numerous army, he made all manner of preparation for a vigorous defence. 2 *Kings* xviii. 13. 2 *Chron.* xxxii. *Iſai.* xxxvi. Particularly, he entered into an alliance with the king of *Egypt* and *Ethiopia*. 2 *Kings* xviii. 21. *Iſai.* xxxvi. 6. This was a meaſure diſpleaſing to God, and therefore is proteſted againſt by his Prophet *Iſaiah* in the xxxth and xxxiſt chapters. And at the ſame time all the other chapters, from the xxixth to the xxxvith chapter, eſpecially thoſe that have immediate reference to this invaſion, might have been dictated to the Prophet by the ſpirit of God.

ISAIAH xxii. Verſe 1 to 15.

As in this paragraph are manifeſt alluſions to *Sennacherib*'s invaſion and *Hezekiah*'s preparations for the defence of *Jeruſalem*, (compare verſe 9, 10, 11. 2 *Chron.* xxxii. 5, 30.) this prophetic admonition to the people, who depended too much upon theſe preparations, probably was delivered about this time. See LOWTH's Comment. on the place.

ISAIAH xxi.

THE inhabitants of *Kedar* were the deſcendants of *Iſhmael*, Gen. xxv. 13, and were one ſpecies of *Arabians* dwelling in *Arabia Petræa*. Theſe were to be ruined within a year after this prophecy was given out. Moſt probably they were overthrown either by *Sennacherib*, as he went into, or returned out of *Egypt*; or by *Tirhakah* king of *Ethiopia*, as he advanced out of *Egypt* againſt *Sennacherib*. 2 *Kings* xix. 9. And therefore, this prophecy may be placed at this time, or within a year or two of it.

ISAIAH xx.

HEZEKIAH, having treated with *Sennacherib*, and agreed to pay him a ſum of money, 2 *Kings* xviii. 14, 15, 16, *Sennacherib* turned his arms againſt *Egypt*; which he greatly diſtreſſed for three years together, *Iſai.* xx. 3, 4. But firſt he ſent *Tartan*, one of his generals, before him, to take *Aſhdod*, the key to *Egypt*. At this time the prophecy againſt *Egypt* in the xxth chapter of *Iſaiah*, was delivered. Note—*Sennacherib* is, in ver. 1, called *Sargon*. Ver. 5. *They*, the Jews, *ſhall be afraid and aſhamed of Ethiopia their expectation, and of Egypt their glory.*

ISAIAH

ISAIAH xviii, xix.

THESE two chapters are alſo levelled againſt *Egypt* and *Ethiopia*, pon which the *Jews* relied too much; and therefore might be deli-ered about the ſame time.

ISAIAH x. ver. 5, &c. xi, xii, xiii, xiv. to ver. 28.

IT appears from chap. x. 8—12, which is a *proſopopœia*, or ſuppoſed peech of the king of *Aſſyria*, that this chapter was delivered after the aking of *Samaria* by *Salmaneſer*, 721; and ſome time before *Sennacherib* eſieged *Jeruſalem*, 710, who was the only king of *Aſſyria* that beſieged *eruſalem* after the taking of *Samaria*. And the ſpeech in this place earing a near affinity to that of *Sennacherib*, 2 Kings xix. 10——14. *ſaiah* xxxvii. 10—14, it is probable that this, and the other chapters, o the 28th verſe of the xivth chapter, were delivered about the time *Sen-acherib* beſieged *Jeruſalem*. Note—In chapter x. 11. *Shall I not, as I ave done unto Samaria*, &c. *Sennacherib* ſpeaks as king of *Aſſyria*, and ſo akes in what his father *Shalmaneſer* had done, as if done by himſelf.

ISAIAH xxxvi, xxxvii.

SENNACHERIB returning out of *Egypt*, where he had been 3 years, notwithſtanding the agreement of peace which he made with *Hezekiah*, narched his army again into *Judea*, laid ſiege to *Lachiſh*, and from hence ſent three of his generals with a proud and blaſphemous meſſage o *Jeruſalem*, 2 Kings xviii. 17, 18. 2 *Chron.* xxxii. 9, &c. This vent, with the circumſtances which attended and followed it, are re-orded in the xxxvith and xxxviith chapters of *Iſaiah*.

NOTE—Before *Sennacherib* laid ſiege to *Jeruſalem*, *Tirhakah*, king of *Ethiopia*, advanced againſt him out of *Egypt*, 2 *Kings* xix. 9; but, as he Prophet *Iſaiah* had predicted, did the *Jews* no ſervice; for he was overthrown by *Sennacherib*, who after that returned to *Jeruſalem*, where his army, being 185,000 men, were all miraculouſly deſtroyed in one night. See Dr. PRIDEAUX's *Con.* at the year 710.

ISAIAH xl, xli, xlii, xliii, &c. to the end of the Book.

As there is no direction to lay theſe chapters, or any of them, in any particular time, they may all be allotted to the eleven laſt years of *Hezekiah*'s prolonged life.

ISAIAH xxii. Ver. 15, to the end.

SHEENA had been ſecretary to king *Hezekiah*, and the good and pious *Eliakim*, the maſter of his houſehold, *Iſai.* xxxvi. 3. 22. *Shebna*, by the queſtions, chap. xxii. 16, ſeems to have been a foreigner, and not well affected to the Jewiſh religion. *What haſt thou* to do *here? and whom*, what relations, *haſt thou here?* It is poſſible this *Shebna*, a man of great abilities, might have got the young king *Manaſſeh*, but 12 years old, and the whole management of affairs, into his own hands; having routed *Eliakim* by ſuch arts as courtiers are wont to practiſe. For he was now both treaſurer, and maſter of the houſehold. To this, perhaps, the wicked conduct of *Manaſſeh* may be aſſigned. *Shebna*, ſecure of the ſtability and continuance of his power and grandeur, was hewing out a magnificent ſepulchre for himſelf and heirs, to perpetuate his memory to all ſucceeding times. On this occaſion, *Iſaiah* might publiſh this prophecy, predicting *Shebna*'s captivity and death, in a remote foreign country, and the future exaltation of good *Eliakim*. This, which would greatly exaſperate *Shebna*, and might occaſion *Iſaiah*'s being put to a cruel death, [ſawn aſunder, *Heb.* xi. 37.] was fulfilled about twenty-two years after, when *Shebna* was taken captive with *Manaſſeh* by *Eſarhaddon*, and carried to *Babylon*, where *Shebna* continued all his life. But *Manaſſeh*, upon his repentance, was reſtored to the throne of *Judah*. And then, probably, good *Eliakim* was reſtored and intruſted with the management of all his affairs, and aſſiſted him in the great reformation he made in religion. 2 *Chron.* xxxiii. 11—17. See Dr. PRIDEAUX's *Con.* Anno 677. *Manaſſeh* 22.

JEREMIAH i, ii.

IN this year *Jeremiah*, in the council of God, received his prophetic commiſſion, as in the firſt chapter. See alſo chap. xxv. 3. And in this year probably he publiſhed the admonitions, warnings, and threatenings, in the ſecond chapter.

JEREMIAH xi. Verſe 1——18.

THE Prophet, ver. 2——9, moſt probably refers to the covenant which *Joſiah* publicly made to keep God's commandments, upon finding the book of the law. 2 *Kings* xxii. 11. xxiii. 3. This was in the 18th year of king *Joſiah*. 2 *Kings* xxii. 3.

JEREMIAH iii, iv, v, vi, vii, viii, ix, x, xii, &c. to the xxi.

THESE chapters, for any thing that appears to the contrary, do lie in regular order; nor have we any ground or intimation for tranſpoſing any

of

them. There is a date, chap. iii. 6. *In the days of Josiah*, without entioning the year of his reign; which, however, shews, that that apter was delivered in some part of his reign. And whereas a severe ought is frequently mentioned in several of these chapters, (*viz.* chap. 3. v. 24, 25. viii. 13, 20. ix. 10, 12. xii. 4. xiv. 1, 2, 3, 4.) this ews, that they are to be laid together in the same year, or years, in hich the drought continued; and all the rest, to the xxist, may follow order of time; and all might be delivered in the last years of king *siah*. Dr. LIGHTFOOT.

JEREMIAH xi. Ver. 18, to the end.

IN some part of the same years the men of *Anathoth* might conspire ainst *Jeremiah*.

HABAKKUK i, ii, iii. ZEPHANIAH i, ii, iii.

As these two Prophets prophesied the same things that *Jeremiah* did, d upon the same occasion, that is, destruction and desolation upon *udah* and *Jerusalem*, because of the many heinous sins they were guilty , they might prophesy about this time.

JEREMIAH xxii. Ver. 1——24.

JEREMIAH being sent of God to the king's house, there proclaimed od's judgments against him and his family, contained in these verses of is chapter. This was soon after *Jehoahaz*, or *Shallum*, was carried ptive into *Egypt*, by *Pharaoh-necho*, king of *Egypt*, who slew *Josiah*, r. 10, 11. *Weep not for the dead*, Josiah, *but weep sore for him that eth away*, Jehoahaz; *for he shall return no more*. Note——*Jehoahaz* igned but three months.

JEREMIAH xxvi.

AFTER that, the Prophet was ordered to go to the temple, and to nounce to all the people the judgments of God, if they did not re- nt. By this he was brought in danger of his life, through the re- ntment of the Priests and Prophets, *ver.* 7, 8; but was preserved by e princes, *ver.* 16.

JEREMIAH xxv.

IN this chapter, and in the beginning of this year, *Jeremiah* prophe- ed of the coming of *Nebuchadnezzar* against *Judah* and *Jerusalem*.

JEREMIAH xxxv.

THE *Rechabites*, upon *Nebuchadnezzar*'s beginning to invade the land of *Judea*, retired out of the country to *Jeruſalem*, where *Jeremiah* found them, in this chapter.

JEREMIAH xlvi.

IN the ſame year, after *Nebuchadnezzar* had defeated the army of *Pharaoh-necho*, this prophecy relating to the Gentiles was delivered.

JEREMIAH xxxvi. Ver. 1——9.

IN the ſame year God commanded *Jeremiah* to collect, and write in a roll, all the words of prophecy which had been ſpoken by him againſt *Iſrael* and *Judah*, and againſt the nations. Which he executed by the aſſiſtance of *Baruch*, his *amanuenſis*; who, as *Jeremiah* was then under confinement, *ver.* 5. read the roll in the temple upon the faſting-day, *i. e.* the great day of atonement, being the 10th of the ſeventh month.

JEREMIAH xlv.

BARUCH being very much affrighted at the threats contained in the roll, and probably uneaſy under apprehenſions of the danger he might incur by reading it publicly, *Jeremiah*, by the command of God, delivered to him the meſſage of encouragement and comfort contained in this chapter.

DANIEL i.

IMMEDIATELY after this, *Nebuchadnezzar*, who ſet out upon his expedition the year before, laid ſiege to *Jeruſalem*, and took it; and bound *Jehoiakim* in fetters, with a deſign to carry him to *Babylon*. 2 *Chron.* xxxvi. 6. But upon *Jehoiakim*'s ſubmiſſion, 2 *Kings* xxiv. 1, he did not carry him to *Babylon*, but reſtored him to the kingdom. Nevertheleſs, he carried great numbers of the people, and ſons of the royal family, and of the nobility, captives, among the reſt *Daniel*.

JEREMIAH xxxvi. Verſe 9, to the end of the Chapter.

THIS year, after the *Chaldeans* were gone from *Jeruſalem*, *Jehoiakim* and his people growing worſe and worſe, in the ninth month, at the faſt, which was then proclaimed, on account of *Nebuchadnezzar*'s having taken

en the city the year before, *Baruch* again read the roll in the houſe of Lord, *ver.* 9, 80. Which coming to the king's ear, and part of the l being read to him, he, thinking perhaps that *Nebuchadnezzar* had eady executed the Divine threatenings, and nothing more was now to feared, and that the Prophet was a malicious, troubleſome fellow, rnt the roll, and commanded *Jeremiah* and *Baruch* to be apprehended. ut they could not be found, for the Lord hid them. Note——*Jere-ah* was now at liberty.

DANIEL ii.

In this year, which was the ſecond of *Nebuchadnezzar*, according to e *Babyloniſh* account, the 4th according to the *Jewiſh*, *Daniel* revealed *Nebuchadnezzar* his dream.

JEREMIAH xxii. Ver. 24, to the end.

In this year this prophecy was declared againſt *Jehoiachin*, or *Coniah*, ho reigned but 3 months, and then, with many others, was carried to captivity. 2 *Kings* xxiv. 11, &c. His uncle *Zedekiah* ſucceeded im. 2 *Kings* xxiv. 17.

JEREMIAH xxiii.

This chapter might be delivered at the ſame time with the foregoing rophecy.

JEREMIAH xiii. Ver. 15, to the end.

By the king and queen mentioned *ver.* 18, are probably meant *Je-oiachin* and his mother. See chap. xxii. 26. 2 *Kings* xxiv. 12. Thus, his prophecy muſt have been delivered about the ſame time with the oregoing.

JEREMIAH xxiv.

After *Jehoiachin* or *Jeconiah* was carried into captivity by *Nebuchad-ezzar*, this prophecy was delivered.

JEREMIAH xlix. Verſe 34, to the end.

In this year alſo is to be placed the prophecy againſt *Elam*, a kingdom upon the river *Ulai*, eaſtward beyond the *Tigris*, in which ſtood *Shuſhan*, afterward the metropolis of the kingdom of *Perſia*.

JEREMIAH

JEREMIAH xxix.

ABOUT the second year of *Zedekiah*'s reign, *Jeremiah*'s letter, contained in this chapter, was sent to the captive Jews at *Babylon*; and an impious answer returned by *Shemaiah*.

JEREMIAH xxx, xxxi.

THESE two chapters, which assure the captive Jews that they should not only return again to *Judea*, but also be the particular care of the Divine Providence to the end of the world, to shew the certainty of the encouraging contents, are ordered to be written in a book, chap. xxx. 2, about the same time with the foregoing letter, and probably were sent to the captive Jews in *Babylon*, whom they principally respected.

JEREMIAH xxvii.

THIS chapter is to be placed in this year, (see chap. xxviii. 1.) namely, after the departure of *Nebuchadnezzar* out of *Judea* and *Syria*, when the kings of the *Ammonites*, *Moabites*, *Edomites*, *Zidonians*, *Tyrians*, &c. sent an embassy to *Zedekiah*, proposing to him a league against the king of *Babylon*. Note—In the first verse, *Jehoiakim* is put for *Zedekiah*, [see ver. 3.] probably by a mistake of the transcriber, who might then have his eye upon the first verse of the foregoing chapter.

JEREMIAH xxviii.

IN this year the affair concerning *Hananiah* the false Prophet, related in this chapter, was transacted. Note—The first verse, according to the best commentators, should be read thus, *When it had been so*, [i. e. when I had continued prophesying with a yoke upon my shoulders from that year, which was] *in the beginning of the reign of Zedekiah, until the fourth year*, &c. See *Glass. Phil. sacra Lib.* IV. *Tract.* I. *Observ.* V. *Pag.* 860. *Nold. Concord. Nota* 677, and LOWTH upon the place.

JEREMIAH l, li.

THESE two chapters contain a book of prophecies which *Jeremiah* wrote, and sent to *Babylon*, by *Seraiah*, who was sent thither by *Zedekiah*, in the 4th year of his reign, chap. li. 59, &c. [*when he went with*, rather, *from Zedekiah* &c.] See *Nold. Concord.* under את or אֵת No. 1.

EZEKIEL i, ii, iii, iv, v, vi, vii.

In the 5th year of *Jehoiachin*'s captivity, which was also the 5th of *dekiah*'s reign, *Ezekiel*, a captive priest in *Chaldea*, received his pro-etic commission in the council of God, and had the revelations and prophecies contained in the seven first chapters of his book. Note—— *ekiel* dates his prophecies from the year in which himself and king *Je-achin* were carried into captivity.

EZEKIEL viii, ix, x, xi.

This year *Ezekiel* in a vision was carried to *Jerusalem*, shewn the several sorts of idolatry practised there by the *Jews* in the very temple; d had revealed unto him the punishments which God would inflict on them for those abominations, and the divine protection of those in ptivity, who continued steady and faithful to his service.

EZEKIEL xii, xiii, xiv, xv, xvi, xvii, xviii, xix.

About this time, *Zedekiah* having entered into a confederacy with e king of *Egypt*, and broken the solemn oath of fidelity which he had orn to king *Nebuchadnezzar*, God, both by types and words of revetion, foreshewed to *Ezekiel* the taking of *Jerusalem* by the *Chaldeans*, *dekiah*'s flight by night, the putting out of his eyes, his imprisonment d death at *Babylon*, the carrying away of the *Jews*, and the remains the *Israelites*, contained in the above-mentioned chapters. Note— *aniel*, though then but a young man, was grown to such a pitch of ety and holiness, as to be matched, by God himself, with *Noah* and *Job*. zek. xiv. 14, 20.

EZEKIEL xx, xxi, xxii, xxiii.

The elders of *Israel* came to *Ezekiel* to enquire of the Lord; but od refuseth to be enquired of by such wicked hypocrites; and in these ur chapters denounces the judgments their abominable impieties deserved.

JEREMIAH xxi, xxxiv. Ver. 1—8.

Nebuchadnezzar having advanced a great army against *Judea*, *Kin.* xxv. 1. to punish *Zedekiah* for his perjury and rebellion, *Zedekiah* st sent *Pashur* and *Zephaniah* to *Jeremiah*, to desire him to enquire of e Lord; by whom *Jeremiah* returned the answer related in the 21st chapter.

chapter. Afterward, *Jeremiah* was ordered in perſon to deliver to *Zedekiah* the prediction contained in chap. xxiv. 1—8.

JEREMIAH xlvii.

PHARAOH HOPHRA marching out of *Egypt* to the relief of his ally *Zedekiah* againſt *Nebuchadnezzar*, who was advancing to beſiege *Jeruſalem*, in his way took *Gaza*, a town of the Philiſtines. A little before this event, *Jeremiah* uttered this prophecy againſt the *Philiſtines*.

JEREMIAH xlviii, xlix. Ver. 1——34.

THESE prophecies, relating to the *Moabites*, *Ammonites*, *Edomites*, &c. who would be obnoxious to the ravages of the *Aſſyrian* armies, might be delivered at the ſame time with the former.

EZEKIEL xxiv, xxv.

On the tenth day of the tenth month in the ſame year, when *Nebuchadnezzar*'s army had laid ſiege to *Jeruſalem*, the ſame was revealed, on the very ſame day, to *Ezekiel* in *Chaldea*; and the deſtruction of the city was typified by a boiling caldron; the ſame day alſo his wife died, as recorded in chap. xxiv. But vengeance is denounced againſt the neighbouring countries, that rejoiced in the preceding calamities, or ſhould rejoice in thoſe that were to come upon *Judea*. Chap. xxv.

JEREMIAH xxxvii. Ver. 1——11.

NOT long after *Nebuchadnezzar*'s army had laid ſiege to *Jeruſalem*, *Pharaoh-Hophra* came with a great force to the relief of *Zedekiah*. Upon which *Nebuchadnezzar* raiſed the ſiege of *Jeruſalem*, in order to march againſt him. Upon which *Zedekiah* ſent a meſſage to *Jeremiah*, before he was put into priſon, chap. xxxvii. 4. the anſwer to which is contained in chap. xxxvii. 1——11.

JEREMIAH xxxiv. Ver. 8. to the end.

UPON the approach of *Nebuchadnezzar*'s army, the terrified Jews entered into a ſolemn covenant, to obſerve God's law, and to releaſe the Hebrew ſervants, which they kept in bondage contrary to his law. But when the *Chaldeans* were gone to meet *Pharaoh*, the general opinion being, that they would return no more, the Jews openly violated the covenant of reformation, by obliging all their ſervants to return to their former ſervitude: for which impious act, the Prophet *proclaimed liberty to the ſword*, &c.

JEREMIAH xxxvii. Ver. 11——16.

WHEN the *Chaldeans* were gone to meet *Pharaoh*, *Jeremiah* was re-ſed out of priſon; and intending to retire to *Anathoth*, from the cala-ties of the ſiege, which he knew would be renewed, was taken up for leſerter as he was paſſing through the gate, and clapt in priſon; but incipally for perſiſting that the city ſhould again be beſieged and taken *Nebuchadnezzar*.

JEREMIAH xxxii, xxxiii.

WHILE *Jeremiah* was in priſon, the contents of theſe chapters were anſacted.

EZEKIEL xxix. Ver. 1——17. xxx.

UPON the approach of the *Chaldeans*, the *Egyptians* treacherouſly de-rted *Zedekiah*, and returned into their own country: Upon this occa-on, *Ezekiel* denounces the diſpleaſure of God againſt their perfidy, pre-cts their deſolation, and at length (within 40 years, chap. xxix. 13.) eir being reduced to one of the baſeſt of nations, inſomuch that they ould no more have a prince of their own to reign over them. Chap. xx. 13. Which hath been remarkably fulfilled, even unto this day. ee Dr. PRIDEAUX's *Con. ad Annum* 598. *Zedekiah* 10.

JEREMIAH xxxvii. Ver. 17, to the end.

ON the retreat of the *Egyptians*, *Nebuchadnezzar* returned to the ſiege f *Jeruſalem*; and it was then king *Zedekiah*, fearing the iſſue, ſent for *eremiah* out of priſon to conſult him.

JEREMIAH xxxviii. Ver. 1——14.

THE princes, offended at *Jeremiah*, caſt him into a low, loathſome, iry dungeon, where he muſt have periſhed, had not *Ebed-melech* gained eave to draw him out, and to place him in a better ſituation in the court f the priſon.

JEREMIAH xxxix. Ver. 15, to the end.

WHILE *Jeremiah* was in the court of the priſon, God by him ſent a eſſage of mercy and deliverance to *Ebed-melech*.

JEREMIAH

JEREMIAH xxxviii. Verſe 14, to the end.

ZEDEKIAH again ſent for *Jeremiah* out of the court of the priſon into the temple, there ſecretly to enquire of him about the iſſue of the ſiege.

EZEKIEL xxvi, xxvii, xxviii.

HERE God declares his judgments againſt *Tyre*, for inſulting the calamitous ſtate of *Jeruſalem*, cloſely beſieged by *Nebuchadnezzar*. Note—*Daniel*'s wiſdom, though but about 36, was become famous over all the Eaſt. *Chap.* xxviii. 3.

EZEKIEL xxxi.

GOD declares his judgments againſt *Pharaoh* and the *Egyptians*.

JEREMIAH xxxix. Ver. 1——11. lii. Ver. 1——30.

THE account of *Jeruſalem*'s being taken, with the ſubſequent circumſtances. Upon this occaſion the 137th Pſalm was compoſed.

JEREMIAH xxxix. Ver. 11—15. xl. Ver. 1—7.

NEBUCHADNEZZAR giveth charge concerning *Jeremiah* to *Nebuzaradan*; who treateth him in a kind and friendly manner.

JEREMIAH xl. Ver. 7, to the end. xli, xlii, xliii. Ver. 1—8.

NEBUCHADNEZZAR makes *Gedaliah* governor of *Judea*. *Iſhmael* ſlays him. *Johanan*, &c. by force carry *Jeremiah* into *Egypt*.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXXV.

PROPHETS *after the Deſtruction of the* TEMPLE, *during the* CAPTIVITY.

JEREMIAH xliii. Ver. 8, to the end. xliv.

THE Prophecies contained in theſe Chapters were revealed, and publiſhed to the *Jews*, in the land of *Egypt*.

The Book of LAMENTATIONS.

THIS Book, which mournfully bewails the deſolation of *Jeruſalem* d the Temple, was compoſed by *Jeremiah* after that ſad event, poſ-ly in the land of *Egypt*; where *Jeremiah* might end his days; for e never hear of his return from thence.

EZEKIEL xxxiii.

THE beginning of this chapter is upon a general ſubject, and of un-rtain date. From the 21ſt verſe it is dated from the time when *Eze-l* firſt received the news of the city's being taken and deſtroyed, which as 18 months, or a year and a half, after the ſad event happened.

EZEKIEL xxxii.

THIS prophecy againſt *Egypt* was delivered in this year and month.

EZEKIEL xxxiv, xxxvi, xxxvii, xxxviii, xxxix.

THESE chapters fall under no date, till we come to the 40th chap-, which is dated the 25th of *Jehoiachin*'s captivity. Therefore, theſe apters were probably delivered ſome time between the 12th and 25th that captivity.

OBADIAH.

OBADIAH propheſied againſt the *Edomites* for their unnatural and teful behaviour towards the *Jews*, in their diſtreſs at the taking of *ruſalem*.

EZEKIEL

EZEKIEL xxxv.

THIS prophecy againſt the *Edomites* ſeems to have been delivered upon the ſame occaſion.

DANIEL iii.

IN this year alſo *Nebuchadnezzar* ſet up his golden image. See Dr. PRIDEAUX's *Con. Anno* 587. *Nebuchad.* 18.

EZEKIEL xl, xli, *&c.* to the end of the Book.

ALL theſe viſions and prophecies, relating to the future ſtate of the church of God, were revealed to *Ezekiel* this year, being the 14th from the deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*.

EZEKIEL xxix. Ver. 17. to the end.

NEBUCHADNEZZAR's army having endured great hardſhips in the ſiege of *Tyre*, which held 13 years, and having got little on the taking of it, (the inhabitants having conveyed themſelves and their effects into the adjacent iſland) God, by the Prophet *Ezekiel*, promiſeth them the ſpoils of *Egypt*, as a reward for their labour. See Dr. PRIDEAUX's *Con. ad An.* 573. *Nebuchad.* 32.

DANIEL iv.

THIS year *Nebuchadnezzar* had his dream of the wonderful great tree, and the cutting down thereof; and the next year fell diſtracted. See Dr. PRIDEAUX's *Con. ad An.* 570.

JEREMIAH lii. Ver. 31, to the end.

THIS year *Nebuchadnezzar* dies, and is ſucceeded by his ſon, *Evil-merodach*, who releaſed *Jehoiachin*, king of *Judah*, out of priſon, where he had been confined 37 years, and advanced him to honour and friendſhip. Note——This laſt chapter was not wrote by *Jeremiah* (ſee *chap.* li. 64.) but by *Baruch* or *Ezra*, or whoever collected *Jeremiah*'s prophecies into one volume.

DANIEL

DANIEL vii.

DANIEL had the vision of the four monarchies, and of the kingdom the *Messiah*.

DANIEL viii.

DANIEL had the vision of the ram and he-goat.

DANIEL v.

DANIEL reads the hand-writing on the wall. *Belshazzar* is slain. *arius* the *Mede* took the *Assyrian* kingdom.

DANIEL vi.

DANIEL's being advanced by *Darius* above all the princes, and made me minister, next to the king, raised so great an envy against him ong the courtiers, that they laid the snare for him which brought n to the lion's den.

DANIEL ix.

DANIEL, apprehending from the prophecy of *Jeremiah*, that the 70 ars captivity of *Judah* were drawing to an end, maketh his prayer to od for the restoration of *Jerusalem*. In answer to which, the Angel *abriel*, was sent to assure him of a much greater redemption to the *wish* nation by the *Messiah*, at the end of 70 weeks, or 490 years.

EZRA i, ii.

DARIUS dieth; *Cyrus* succeeds him, and by his decree puts an end the 70 years captivity of the *Jews*. This in the first chapter of *zra*. In the second chapter an account is given of the *Jews* that returned. Note—On the return of *Judah* and *Benjamin* from the Babyish captivity, several of the other tribes of *Israel* returned with them t of *Assyria*, *Babylon*, and *Media*, whither they had been before carried. *zra* vi. 17. See Dr. PRIDEAUX's *Con. ad An.* 536. p. 190. Upon is joyous occasion the 126th Psalm was composed.

EZRA iii.

THE *Jews* begin to rebuild *Jerusalem* and the Temple.

CHAP. XXXVI.

PROPHETS *after the* CAPTIVITY *under the second* TEMPLE.

EZRA iv.

THE *Samaritans* obſtruct the *Jews* in the building of the City and Temple: and ſo the work ceaſed till the ſecond year of *Darius Hyſtaſpes*; namely, for 14 years.

DANIEL x, xi, xii.

THE viſions and prophecies in theſe chapters were revealed to *Daniel* in the third year of *Cyrus*, and the third year after the Captivity.

HAGGAI i. Ver. 1—12.

HAGGAI excites *Zerubbabel*, the governor, and *Jeſhua*, the high-prieſt, to build the Lord's houſe, in the ſecond year of *Darius Hyſtaſpes*.

HAGGAI i. Ver. 12. to the end. EZRA v. 1, 2.

ZERUBBABEL and *Jeſhua* immediately apply to the work.

HAGGAI ii. Ver. 1—10.

HAGGAI encourages them from the Lord to proceed.

ZECHARIAH i. Ver. 1—7.

ZECHARIAH makes his firſt addreſs to the *Jews*, who were building the Temple, aſſuring them that God would turn to them with a bleſſing, if they turned to him by repentance and reformation.

HAGGAI ii. Ver. 10. to the end.

HAGGAI rebukes the indifference of the *Jews* in building the Temple; encourages vigorous endeavours with the bleſſing of plenty; and aſſures *Zerubbabel* of the extraordinary favour of God.

ZECHARIAH

ZECHARIAH i. Ver 7. to the end. ii, iii, iv, v, vi.

AT this time these visions, greatly encouraging the *Jews* in building he City and Temple, and assuring them of the Divine protection against l their enemies, were revealed to *Zechariah*.

EZRA v. Ver. 3. to the end.

THE *Samaritans* again disturb the *Jews*, and put a stop to the build- ng of the Temple.

EZRA vi. Ver. 1——15.

DARIUS sends a decree to *Jerusalem*, positively ordering the Temple o be rebuilt, and the expences of it furnished out of the taxes of the rovinces. Which accordingly was done, till it was finished. See Dr. PRIDEAUX's *Con. ad An.* 518.

ZECHARIAH vii, viii.

The *Jews* who were in *Babylon*, (for great numbers still remained here, and in other parts of the *Persian* empire,) judging that the state f *Judea* and *Jerusalem* was now so thoroughly restored and established y *Darius*'s decree, that it might be no longer proper to keep the fast n the fifth month (when the City and Temple were burnt by *Nebuza- adan)*, which they had hitherto observed for 70 years together, sent two nessengers to *Jerusalem*, to ask the opinion of the priests and prophets hat were there, about this matter. And God gave them, by the Pro- het *Zechariah*, the answer relating to that and other fasts, which we ave in the seventh and eighth chapters of his prophecy.

ZECHARIAH ix, x, xi, xii, xiii, xiv.

As these chapters have no date, we may suppose they were delivered n some of the times subsequent to the fourth year of *Darius Hystaspes*.

EZRA vi. Ver. 15. to the end.

THIS year the Temple was finished, and dedicated with great joy and olemnity. The *Jews* had been about it, from first to last, 20 years.

ESTHER i.

ARTAXERXES, or *Ahasuerus*, being thoroughly settled in his throne, made a great feast for all his nobles, and divorced *Vashti* his queen.

ESTHER ii. Ver. 1—16.

A collection of virgins made for the king, of which *Esther* was one.

EZRA vii, viii, ix, x.

IN the beginning of this year *Ezra* received from *Artaxerxes*, or *Ahasuerus*, a very ample commission for his return to *Jerusalem*, with any of his countrymen that were disposed to go along with him; giving them full authority in things both civil and religious, to regulate both according to the law. This decree was probably granted at the solicitation of *Esther*. See Dr. PRIDEAUX's *Con. ad An.* 458. The decree, the families and numbers of the *Jews* that went with *Ezra* to *Jerusalem*, fall within the compass of this and the next year, and are contained in the four last chapters of this Book.

NOTE——From *Ezra*'s entering upon this work, the beginning of *Daniel*'s 70 weeks is to be computed. Dr. PRIDEAUX's *Con. ad An.* 458, p. 377. Note also——That *Ezra* continued in the government about 13 years; till *Nehemiah* succeeded him in the 20th year of *Artaxerxes*, or *Ahasuerus*.

ESTHER ii. Ver. 16——21.

ESTHER, after having been only concubine about two years, is now made queen.

ESTHER ii. Ver. 21. to the end.

BIGTHAN and *Taresh*, two eunuchs in the palace, entered into a conspiracy against the life of *Artaxerxes*, or *Ahasuerus*, which was discovered to the king by *Mordecai*, queen *Esther*'s uncle.

ESTHER iii, iv, v, &c. to the end of the Book.

HAMAN, an *Amalekite*, descended from king *Agag*, in *Saul*'s time, made prime minister to *Artaxerxes*, laid a plot to extirpate the whole race of the *Jews*. But it turned upon himself, as related in the book of *Esther*.

NEHEMIAH

NEHEMIAH i, ii, iii, &c. to the end of the Book.

NEHEMIAH, with a commission from *Artaxerxes*, or *Ahasuerus*, probably by favour of queen *Esther*, (Neh. ii. 6.) succeedeth *Ezra* in the vernment of *Judea*, rebuilds the walls, repeoples *Jerusalem*, reforms orders, &c. Thus he was employed for 12 years; namely, from e 20th to the 32d year of *Artaxerxes*. Neh. v. 14. xiii. 6. Within hich time *Ezra* is supposed to have published his edition of the Hebrew riptures. See Dr. PRIDEAUX's *Con.* p. 475, &c.
Nehemiah returns from *Jerusalem* to the *Persian* court. *Neh.* xiii. 6.

MALACHI i, ii, iii, iv.

ABOUT this time flourished *Malachi*, the Prophet. See Dr. PRIEAUX's *Con. ad An.* 428. p. 570.

NEHEMIAH xiii. Ver. 6, 7, &c.

AFTER *certain days*, i. e. after about five years, *Nehemiah* comes gain to *Jerusalem* with a new commission, and makes further reformaon: with which act of reformation, the holy Scriptures of the Old estament are closed up.
Simon the just, high priest of the *Jews*, completes the Canon of the ld Testament, by adding the *two Books of Chronicles*, *Ezra*, *Nehemiah*, *ther*, and *Malachi*. "That these could not be put into the Canon by *Ezra*, is plain: for four of those books are, upon just grounds, supposed to have been written by *Ezra* himself, (that is, the *two books of Chronicles*, and the Books of *Ezra* and *Esther*,) and the Book of *Nehemiah* was written after his [*Ezra*'s] time; and so most likely was the Book of *Malachi* also. And therefore a later time must be assigned for their insertion into the sacred Canon; and none is more likely than that of *Simon the just*, who is said to have been the last of the men of the great synagogue. What the *Jews* call the great synagogue, were a number of elders, amounting to 120, succeeding each other in a continued series from the return of the *Jews* from the *Babylonish* captivity, to the time of *Simon the just*, and laboured in restoring the *Jewish* church and state in that country. In order to which, the holy Scriptures being the rule they were to go by, their chief care and study was to make a true collection of those Scriptures, and publish them accurately to the people. *Ezra*, and the men of the great synagogue in his time, settled the Canon of all but the foresaid books; and those were probably settled, and added to the Canon, in the times of *Simon the just*, who died about 31 years after *Alexander the Great*. For in 1 *Chron.* iii. 19, &c. the genealogy of the sons of *Zerubbabel* is carried down for so many descents after him as may well be thought to reach the times of *Alexander*. And in *Neh.* xii. 22. we have the

" days of *Jaddua* ſpoken of, as then paſt; but *Jaddua* outlived *Alexan-*
" *der* two years. Theſe paſſages, therefore, were probably inſerted by
" *Simon the juſt*, who perfected, and finally ſettled the Canon of the
" holy Scriptures. After this followed the *miſhnical* times, that is, the
" times of traditions. Hitherto the Scriptures were the only rule of
" faith and manners which God's people ſtudied; but thenceforth tra-
" ditions began to be regarded, till at length they overbore the word
" of God itſelf, as we find in our Saviour's time. The collection of
" theſe traditions they call the *miſhnah*, that is, the ſecond law; and
" thoſe who delivered and taught them were ſtiled the *miſhnical* Doc-
" tors." See Dr. PRIDEAUX's *Con. Anno* 292. *Ptolemy Soter*, 13.*

CHAP. XXXVII.

The State of the JEWS, *and of other* NATIONS, *at the Time when our Lord came into the World.*

AFTER the *Babyloniſh* captivity the *Jews* no more lapſed into idolatry, but remained ſteady in the acknowledgment and worſhip of the one living and true God. Even then they fell into new ways of perverting religion, and the wiſe and holy intentions of the Divine law. I. By laying all the ſtreſs on the external and leſs momentous parts of it, while they neglected the weighty and ſubſtantial, true holineſs of heart and life. Mankind are too eaſily drawn into this error: while they retain a ſenſe of religion, they are too apt to liſten to any methods by which it may be reduced to a conſiſtency with the gratifications of their paſſions, pride, and avarice. Thus, by placing religion in mere profeſſion, or in the zealous obſervance of rites and ceremonies, inſtead of real piety, truth, purity, and goodneſs, they learn to be religious without virtue. II. By ſpeculating and commenting upon the Divine commands and inſtitutions, till their force is quite enervated, and they are refined into a ſenſe that will commodiouſly allow a ſlight regard inſtead of ſincere obedience. III. By confirming and eſtabliſhing the two former methods of corrupting religion, by tradition and the authority of learned Rabbies; pretending that there was a ſyſtem of religious rules delivered by word of mouth from *Moſes*, explanatory of the written law, known only to thoſe Rabbies; to whoſe judgment, therefore, and deciſion, all the people were to ſubmit.

This, in time, the ſpace of 219 years, became the general ſtate of religion among the *Jews*, after they had diſcarded idolatry; and this ſpirit prevailed among them for ſome ages (290 years) before the coming of the *Meſſiah*. But, however, it did not interfere with the main ſyſtem of Providence, or the introducing the knowledge of God among the Nations,

* Turn to the Appendix, for the Chronological Dates belonging to this and chapters xxxiv. xxxv.

ons, as they ſtill continued ſteadfaſt in the worſhip of the true God, thout danger of deviating from it. Beſides, they were now, much ore than formerly, exerciſed in reading, thinking, and reaſoning, and ere more capable of themſelves of judging what was right. *Luke* xii. . And ſeveral of them did ſo judge. Some of them were truly re-ious and virtuous; and all of them had ſtrong expectation of the *Meſ-h* about the time of his appearance; and were ſufficiently qualified to dge of religious matters, and of the evidences of his miſſion. Thus e *Jews* were prepared by the preceding diſpenſation for the reception the *Meſſiah*, and the juſt notions of religion which he was ſent to culcate; inſomuch that their guilt muſt be highly aggravated, if they jected him and his inſtructions. It could not be for want of capacity, t of integrity, and muſt be aſſigned to wilful blindneſs and obduracy. ut of regard to temporal power, grandeur, and enjoyments, they loved arkneſs rather than light.

In the mean time, the Pagan Nations had made great openings in iſdom and virtue. Thoſe arts that began in *Greece*, had travelled into her lands; learning had got footing among the illiterate, and huma-ity and ſocial affections among the barbarous; and many good and ſeful books, uſeful even to this day among Chriſtians, were written in hics for the right conduct of life. The light of nature was carried igh; or rather, the darkneſs of it was much enlightened. Such was, length, the ſtate of the *Gentiles*, God having ſtill been pleaſed, from me to time, to raiſe up among them perſons uncommonly endowed, or their inſtruction, and to fit them for the day when he ſhould more xplicitly reveal himſelf and his ſacred will to them. In a word, what ith time, and the tranſmigrating of knowledge from region to region, nd the labours of poets and philoſophers, men, at about the *claſſic æra*, hen our Lord came into the world, in general, had gained tolerable ſt ideas of virtue and moral truth; and ſo, were in a condition to ap-rehend and embrace the higher and more important truths of God, and is providence, and a future ſtate.

For many ages the *Jews* had been well known in the eaſtern empires, mong the *Aſſyrians*, *Chaldeans*, *Medes*, and *Perſians*; but till the time f *Alexander the Great*, they had no communication with the *Grecians*. bout the year before Chriſt 332, *Alexander* built *Alexandria* in *Egypt*; nd, to people his new city, removed thither many of the *Jews*, allowing hem the uſe of their own laws and religion, and the ſame liberties with he *Macedonians* themſelves. The *Macedonians*, who ſpake the *Greek* anguage, and other *Greeks*, were the principal inhabitants of *Alexandria*. rom them the *Jews* learned to ſpeak *Greek*, which was the common anguage of the city, and which ſoon became the native language of the *Jews* that lived there; who, on that account, were called *Helleniſts*, or *Greek-Jews*, mentioned *Acts* vi. 1—9. xi. 20. Theſe *Greek-Jews* had ynagogues in *Alexandria*; and for their benefit, the five books of *Moſes*, vhich alone at firſt were publicly read, were tranſlated into *Greek*, (by vhom is uncertain) and read in their ſynagogues every ſabbath-day. And n the time of *Antiochus Epiphanes*, about 168 years before *Chriſt*, when he Prophets alſo began to be read in the ſynagogues of *Judea*, the Pro-hets alſo were tranſlated into *Greek* for the uſe of the *Alexandrian* Jews.

This tranſlation contributed much to the ſpread of the knowledge of true religion among the Nations in the weſtern parts of the world.

For the *Jews*, their ſynagogues and worſhip, were, after *Alexander*'s death, diſperſed almoſt every where among the Nations. *Ptolemy*, one of *Alexander*'s ſucceſſors, having reduced *Jeruſalem* and all *Judea*, about 320 years before *Chriſt*, carried a hundred thouſand *Jews* into *Egypt*, and there raiſed conſiderable numbers of them to places of truſt and power; and ſeveral of them he placed in *Cyrene* and *Libya*. *Seleucus*, another of *Alexander*'s ſucceſſors, about 300 years before *Chriſt*, built *Antioch* in *Cilicia*, and many other cities, in all 35, and ſome of them capital cities in the Greater and Leſſer *Aſia*; in all which he planted the *Jews*, giving them equal privileges and immunities with the *Greeks* and *Macedonians*; eſpecially at *Antioch* in *Syria*, where they ſettled in great numbers, and became almoſt as conſiderable a part of that city, as they were at *Alexandria*. Dr. PRIDEAUX's *Con. Anno* 293. *Ptolemy Soter*, 12. On that memorable day of *Pentecoſt*, Acts ii. 5, 9, 11, 12. were aſſembled in *Jeruſalem*, *Jews*, *devout men*, *out of every nation under heaven*; namely, *Parthians*, *Medes*, and *Perſians* of the province of *Elymais*, inhabitants of *Meſopotamia*, *Judea*, *Cappadocia*, *Pontus*, *Aſia*, *Phrygia*, *Pamphylia*, *Egypt*, *Cyrene* in *Lybia*, *Rome*, *Cretes*, and *Arabs*, who were all either natural *Jews*, or devout men. *i. e.* proſelytes to the *Jewiſh* religion. And in every city of the *Roman* empire where *Paul* preached, he found a body of his countrymen, the *Jews*; except in *Athens*, which was at that time, I ſuppoſe, a town of no conſiderable trade. Which ſhews that the *Jews*, and their ſynagogues, at the time of our Lord's appearance, were providentially ſcattered over all the *Roman* empire; and had in every place introduced, more or leſs, among the nations, the knowledge and worſhip of God; and ſo had prepared great numbers for the reception of the Goſpel.

About the time that *Alexander* built *Alexandria* in *Egypt*, the uſe of the *Papyrus* for writing was firſt found out in that country. Dr. PRIDEAUX's *Con. Anno* 332. *Darius* 4. p. 706. Vol. II. This invention was ſo favourable to literature, that *Ptolemy Soter*, one of *Alexander*'s ſucceſſors, was thereby enabled to erect a *muſeum*, or library; which by his ſon and ſucceſſor, *Philadelphus*, who died 247 years before *Chriſt*, was augmented to an hundred thouſand volumes; and by ſucceeding *Ptolemies*, to ſeven hundred thouſand. Part of this library, which was placed in a ſeparate building from the other part, happened to be burnt when *Julius Cæſar* laid ſiege to *Alexandria*; but, after that loſs, it was again much augmented, and ſoon grew up to be larger, and of more eminent note, than the former; and ſo it continued for many ages to be of great fame and uſe in thoſe parts, till at length it was burnt and finally deſtroyed by the *Saracens*, in the year of our Lord 642. Dr. PRIDEAUX's *Con.* Vol. III. p. 21, *&c. Anno* 284. This plainly proves how much the invention of turning the *Papyrus* into *paper* contributed to the increaſe of books, and the advancement of learning, for ſome ages before the coming of our Lord; for doubtleſs, by this means, private hands would alſo more eaſily be ſupplied with books than before.

Add to all this, that the world, after many changes and revolutions, was, by God's all-ruling wiſdom, thrown into that form of civil affairs which

ich beſt ſuited with the great intended alteration. The many petty
es and tyrannies whoſe paſſions and bigotry might have run counter
the ſchemes of Providence, were all ſwallowed up in one great power,
Romans, to which all appeals lay; the ſeat of which, *Rome*, lay at
reat diſtance from *Jeruſalem*, the ſpring from whence the Goſpel was
ariſe, and flow to all nations. And therefore, as no material obſtruc-
n to the Goſpel could ariſe but from that one quarter, none could
ldenly ariſe from thence, but only in proceſs of time, when the Goſ-
was ſufficiently ſpread and eſtabliſhed, as it did not in the leaſt in-
fere with the *Roman* polity or government. The Goſpel was firſt
bliſhed in a time of general peace and tranquillity throughout the
ole world, which gave the preachers of it an opportunity of paſſing
ely from one country to another, and the minds of men the advan-
ge of attending calmly to it. Many ſavage Nations were civilized by
e *Romans*, and acquainted with the arts and virtues of their conquerors.
Thus the darkeſt countries had their thoughts awakened, and were
owing to a capacity of receiving at the ſtated time, the knowledge
true religion. So that all things and circumſtances conſpired now
th the views of Heaven, and made this apparently *the fulneſs of time*,
Gal. iv. 4.) or the fitteſt juncture for God to reveal himſelf to the *Gen-*
s, and to put an end to idolatry throughout the earth. Now the
nds of men were generally ripe for a purer and brighter diſpenſation,
d the circumſtances of the world were ſuch as favoured the ſucceſs
d progreſs of it.

In this very time the *Meſſiah* came: nor, for ought I can ſee, could
have come more opportunely at any other; becauſe the world was
no other preceding time ſo well prepared to receive his doctrines. As
remiſſion of ſin, and eternal ſalvation, it is all one whenever he came:
cauſe the ſacrifice which he offered for ſin, had its effects with re-
rd to the time paſt, as well as to the time to come; to the penitent,
at were dead, as well as to the living, or thoſe that were yet to be born.
ee *Scripture Doctrine of Atonement*, p. 80.) Immortality muſt belong
much to thoſe who lived virtuouſly, according to their degree of light,
fore the *Meſſiah* came, as to thoſe who lived after his coming; and
e bleſſedneſs of the future ſtate, though not alike revealed, yet was
ke acceſſible to the one as to the other.

Upon a review of the whole, it will appear, that the condition of
nkind was bettered ſtep by ſtep, as the reaſon and nature of things di-
ted and would permit. The ſcope and intendment of the whole
heme of Divine Providence, in all its various diſpenſations, was to
ing human nature, by proper degrees, and in a way conſiſtent with
oral agency, to all the beauty, holineſs, and perfection it can, in this
eſent ſtate, attain to. And though we are not indeed able abſolutely
trace all the reaſons of the Divine conduct, and to demonſtrate the
ſdom of it in every particular; yet we may in general diſcover, that
the parts of this ſcheme were wiſely formed, and purſued, depend-
g regularly on each other, leading to the ſame great and good end,
d adapted to the reſpective circumſtances and condition of mankind.

Note—After the publication of the Goſpel, the *Jewiſh* peculiarity
s no longer of uſe for preſerving the knowledge of God in the world.

That

That end would be much better answered by its dissolution, and the dispersion of the *Jews* all over the earth, as they are even unto this day. [For the most excellent character of *Jesus Christ*, and the Divine principles, doctrine, and spirit of the Gospel, see my Treatise upon the LORD'S SUPPER.]*

CHAP. XXXVIII.

Mankind, having abused their Natural POWERS, *stand in need of an Extraordinary* REVELATION.

THE Scriptures are the word of God; they are the language and address of the universal Father to his children in this world, whom he hath endowed with rational faculties to hear and understand his voice. The Scriptures are given *by inspiration of God, and are profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.* 2 Tim. iii. 16. The glory of God indeed is to be seen in all the works of his hands; and the speech of his Almighty power, wisdom, and goodness, is to be heard in the appearances of creation which are daily before our eyes. *Psal.* xix. 1, &c. Mankind, in a faithful use of their natural Powers, might, without any other guide, know God. *Rom.* i. 19. *For that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them (for the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, so) that* even the Heathen, who have no other rule but the light of nature, they might be *without excuse*, if they are totally ignorant of God. But how much Mankind in all ages have abused and misapplied their understandings, is notoriously evident; and therefore it must be evident how much they stand in need of an extraordinary Revelation to correct their errors, to reduce them to the obedience of God, and to secure them from relapsing into idolatry and apostacy from him.

I think, no book can contain more evident marks of such a Revelation than the Scriptures, eminently so called, which we are happily possessed of. There we have the fullest and clearest account of the nature and perfections of God, beyond what the world at best could have attained to, and far beyond what could, in the ordinary course of things, have been preserved through succeeding generations. The knowledge of

* With this chapter ends Dr. TAYLOR'S SCHEME of SCRIPTURE-DIVINITY, from the copy he printed at *Warrington*, for the use of the Students in the Academy there; and since corrected, with the Hebrew and Greek words inserted, by himself.

The following chapters the EDITOR hath annexed, and are printed from Dr. TAYLOR'S Manuscript; and would have appeared to greater advantage, had they had his correcting hand.

God not being a mere ſpeculative truth, but having near connexion
n our morals, would conſequently, as the morals of men are very
le to be corrupted, have alſo proportionably been obſcured, till it had
manner quite vaniſhed away; which we know hath in fact been
. In the Scriptures, as in a durable ſtorehouſe, not to be demo-
ed by time, or uncertain tradition, we have the moſt noble diſcove-
of the nature and perfections of God, as he is our Maker, our Fa-
, Owner, Ruler, and daily Benefactor; as he is glorious in all his
ibutes; as he is infinite, and independent, eternal, and unchange-
, in his being, knowledge, wiſdom and power; as perfectly holy,
d, righteous, and true. And theſe glories of the Divine nature are
cribed, not in the way of philoſophical diſſertations, not by a ſeries
abſtract reaſoning, which, how amuſing or inſtructing ſoever to minds
a more refined turn and taſte, are but of little ſervice to the bulk of
nkind, who have but little leiſure, and perhaps leſs inclination, to
end to the curious and abſtruſer deductions of reaſon; not thus are the
ries of the Divine nature delineated in Scripture, but exhibited in a
g and eaſily-intelligible ſeries of facts and events, wherein God hath
nifeſted his goodneſs, wiſdom, power, and juſtice, from the beginning
the world. In which way the mind, with very little labour of thought,
at once convinced of the being and perfections of God, and ſtruck
h admiration, reverence, love, and every right affection which the
owledge of God ſhould produce in us.

In the Scriptures any one, in common life, may not only very readily
that God is, and that he is all that the moſt learned, the moſt exact,
moſt ſubtle, the moſt ſublime philoſophy, all that the utmoſt appli-
ion and ſtudy of the wiſeſt men can diſcover; but he ſeeth this at the
ne time in a practical light; he ſeeth that God is all this to *us*; that,
great as he is in himſelf, he is our God and Father; that he hath,
m his own immenſity of being, given us being, a noble and diſtin-
iſhed kind of being; that he conſtantly regards us, loveth us, inte-
ts himſelf in our affairs, is concerned for our welfare, is daily near
, the object of our truſt and dependence; that all our ſafety is in his
vour; and that in his favour, and under his protection, we are infinitely
e and happy: that we are accountable to him for our actions,
at we are continually under his eye, and can flee no whither from his
rit and preſence; that we ought always to ſet him before us, to act
in his ſight, and to approve ourſelves to his all-ſearching eye; that he
th taken us into the neareſt relations to himſelf; that his deſign is to
ake us good, in order to make us for ever happy; that, for this pur-
ſe, he hath been carrying on various diſpenſations, from the beginning
the world, to invite and draw men unto himſelf.

At length, in the fulneſs of time, in that time which to his infinite
ſdom ſeemed moſt expedient, he ſent a divine meſſenger, the word,
s only begotten Son, from his own boſom, to redeem men from ini-
ity, to reconcile them to God; and in the way, Divine wiſdom judged
oſt proper to eſtabliſh, upon the moſt firm and beautiful foundation,
e eternal ſalvation of all pious and virtuous men that have ever been,
ſhall hereafter be in the world. The eternal God in Chriſt will be
eir everlaſting ſtrength, and joy, and glory. Thus, I would obſerve,

we

we not only, in the eaſieſt and cleareſt way, learn God and his perfe tions from Scripture, but we learn them in a manner the moſt prop and powerful to engage and unite our hearts to God, to warm ar quicken our ſpirits, to excite us to the love and obedience of God, ar to conſider ourſelves infinitely intereſted in his attributes and perfection which is to learn divine things, i. e. the moſt excellent things, in method vaſtly ſuperior to all the reaſonings and inſtructions of the be and wiſeſt philoſophers.

In the Scriptures, any man of common ſenſe may not only with ea learn his duty in the fulleſt extent; but at the ſame time, by the numerou examples of pious men in all ages, he may ſee that it is practicable, an may ſee how to engage in it; how exact, how conſtant, how ready an cheerful he ſhould be in the diſcharge of it; how he ought to reſi temptations, to ſtruggle with difficulties. Even a mean capacity, b reading the Scriptures, ſhall at the ſame time diſcern the reaſonablenes and the beauty of holineſs, and alſo be furniſhed with the ſtrongeſt argu ments and motives to embrace it, and to perſevere therein; ſhall be a ſured of the Divine aſſiſtance and protection in a religious courſe, ſha find the moſt proper conſolations and encouragements in every the mo diſtreſſed ſtate of affairs; to every precept he ſhall find an adjoined pro miſe; and his duty will ſhine brightly before his eyes, in the light an hope of everlaſting glory.

There we have the trueſt and moſt effectual rules for forming ou minds into all habits of virtue; not ſimple propoſitions, declaring wha we ought to do and be, but rules of life intermixed with the power an ſplendour of Divine grace, working mightily to renew us into the Divin nature. There religion appears in all its truth, luſtre, ſweetneſs, an majeſty. There it is dreſſed in all its charms; not as a ſour, ſevere moroſe, gloomy principle, forbidding enjoyment, and the parent only o ſorrow, horror, and deſpair; but as our life, our glory, our peace, ou joy; as giving us the trueſt reliſh and enjoyment of life, as the ſourc of the moſt ſolid pleaſure and comfort, as uniting us to God, as lodging us for ever in the Almighty arms of his love and goodneſs; as leadin to, and preparing for, endleſs joys and pleaſures in his preſence.

As to ſin and wickedneſs, the philoſophers have ſaid much concernin the odious nature of vice; that it is evil, and the worſt of evils; tha it is the diſeaſe and deformity of the mind, hurtful to the health o the body, and ruinous to the reputation and eſtate. Their reflection were ſo far juſt, but the benefit of them was confined to men of letter and ſtudy; the vulgar received little or no advantage from them: but i the Scriptures, the meaneſt minds are favoured with far better inſtruc tions than they could give. There ſin is not only ſet forth in all its odious colours, and in all its pernicious effects, as to this preſent life; but its deadly nature is demonſtrated as it ſtands in contrariety to God, as it is the tranſgreſſion of his holy law, as it expoſeth us to his diſplea ſure, and diſqualifieth us for his bleſſing; as it is oppoſite to all the end of our creation, and conſequently as deſerving of death. That God will puniſh all the impenitent workers of iniquity with everlaſting de ſtruction, and purge out of his kingdom every thing that offends, that is either miſchievous or polluting. And all this is ſo plainly and power

fully

y inculcated upon the mind, by many dreadful examples of the Di-
e vengeance upon ungodly men, throughout the whole ſeries of
ipture-hiſtory, by ſo many expreſs declarations of God's wrath, and
many exhortations of his goodneſs and mercy, to turn from every
way, that no one, who carefully and ſeriouſly reads the Scriptures
miſs, not only of ſeeing the evil, the irregularity and deformity of
but of having his mind affected with it, and wrought into the moſt
onal and the moſt ſettled deteſtation of it.

With regard to the pardon of ſin, the wiſeſt of philoſophers ſeem to
e very imperfect notions of it. They rarely and very ſuperficially
ſidered it in its relation of diſſonancy to the Divine perfections; and
refore ſay little or nothing concerning the placableneſs of the Deity,
ether God would pardon ſin, or in what way his wiſdom thought
per to do it. Sacrifices were frequent among them; but they ſeem
have underſtood nothing of their true nature and end, nor were at all
citous to inquire into them. In truth, they did not underſtand the
e demerit of ſin, and therefore of courſe muſt be in the dark as to
remiſſion of it. But all theſe things are open and obvious to the
akeſt capacity, in Scripture.

How much the world was in the dark about a future ſtate without a
velation, is well known; and how clearly now the world to come is
ened to us in the awful proſpects of eternal happineſs, or endleſs per-
on, can be concealed from none who are ever ſo little acquainted with
Goſpel of Chriſt.——Theſe things, duly attended to, will ſhew
the admirable excellency of the holy Scriptures; that God's word is
th, and able to make us wiſe unto ſalvation; and further to demon-
ate, that it is our duty to be much in reading them.

Reading the Scriptures is one of the firſt principles of our religion,
we are Chriſtians, becauſe our profeſſion is built wholly upon the
iptures. We juſtly own no other rule of our faith but the word of
d. *Eph.* ii. 20. *We are built upon the foundation of the Apoſtles and*
phets, Jeſus Chriſt himſelf being the chief corner-ſtone. And we are
lt upon no other foundation. If we are true Chriſtians, however
may uſe or value the writings of men, we make not them, not the
t of them, the rule of our faith, but the word of God alone. But
t rule ought to be thoroughly peruſed, and digeſted; otherwiſe, how
od ſoever in itſelf, or how much ſoever we profeſs to take it for our
e, it is in fact no rule to us. The word of God is the guide of our
ions; *it is a lamp unto our feet, and a light unto our path.* Pſal. cxix.
5. Should we not then diligently ſtudy the word of God, that we may
wander from his commandments? The word of God is the ſpring
all our comfort and hopes.

There, and there alone, we have the rich and immenſe treaſure of the
vine promiſes; and from thence alone we can draw ſolid ſupport and
nſolation, in any dark hour of trial and affliction. In ſhort, to all
valuable purpoſes of knowledge and life, the Scriptures do infinitely
el all human compoſitions whatſoever. They are but as the twink-
g ſtars to that ocean of light which is poured out daily from the body
the ſun. Of all the means of knowledge and wiſdom in the world,
now nothing to be compared with the word of God. The reaſon of
the

the thing therefore requires we ſhould have our eyes intent upon thi light and illumination. For this end God hath given us this invalua ble treaſure, the holy Scriptures, that we ſhould make them our ſtudy.

It muſt be obſerved carefully, that it is not enough to be much i reading the Scriptures; but while we read, we ſhould employ all our at tention to underſtand them. The Scriptures may be underſtood, bu evidently not in every degree by every man; for as there are various ſort and degrees of knowledge in Scripture, ſome perhaps, at preſent, be yond the reach of any man that ever yet was in the world; and as ther are in men various capacities, and degrees of learning; ſo it is manifeſt all men cannot attain to the ſame degree of underſtanding in divine things but there muſt neceſſarily be a great difference between the knowledg of one man and another in matters of faith and revelation. This ſhew the abſurdity of the Popiſh ſcheme, which pretends to reduce the Chriſ tian faith in all its parts to a certain invariable ſtandard, to which every man either explicitly or implicitly, either with or without underſtanding muſt conform.

This ſhews, how much ſoever it is our duty to communicate know ledge one to another, that it is quite contrary to true religion to quarre with one another, or to be diſpleaſed becauſe we have not all the ſam degree of underſtanding in matters of faith and religion; becauſe this according to the preſent conſtitution of our minds, and of the Revela tion God hath given us, which he never intended ſhould be equally un derſtood by all, is quite impracticable. But although the Scriptures ar not to be underſtood in every degree by every man, yet they may b underſtood by every man ſo far as God requireth, i. e. ſo far as he i capable of underſtanding them; for what a man can underſtand, he may underſtand, if he is not wanting to himſelf.

And as God can require of no man beyond his abilities, ſo no mor than what a man can underſtand of Scripture is to him a rule of faith and practice; for what he cannot underſtand, he cannot be bound to be lieve or do. Further, thoſe things in Scripture which are of the higheſ importance, and moſt conducive to a holy life, are generally very eaſy to be underſtood; and therefore, how perplexed ſoever thoſe other things may be about which men have differed, though not ſo perplexed in Re velation as they are in men's heads and writings,—yet, I ſay, how per plexed and difficult ſoever they may be, the grand principles of faith and practice are ſo evident, that any ordinary capacity may, with due care and attention, eaſily gain the moſt comfortable knowledge of them. Thus the Scriptures may be underſtood.

So far as they are not underſtood, they are at leaſt uſeleſs to us. Nay further, the Scriptures miſunderſtood may prove very hurtful to us. The things chiefly to be underſtood in Scripture are *principles*, or the grounds and reaſons of things, and *precepts* which are the rules of duty: now, if we miſtake either, we ſhall throw all into confuſion, our way will be all miſt and clouds; that which ſhould be light will be darkneſs, or, which is all one, a falſe light to miſlead us; that which ſhould be our joy, will be our heavineſs; that which ſhould be our com fort, and inſpire cheerful hope, will be a dead weight to burthen our ſpirits and clog our courſe. Our path, which ſhould be as the ſhining light, that ſhineth more and more, will be a gloomy melancholy road, and we

ll make our way with difficulty, becauſe we want that true ſenſe and owledge of the ways and will of God, which is neceſſary to give life, nfort, and vigour. Chimeras and frightful images will terrify our ıſciences, and fill us with groundleſs fears; God will be painted in nſtrous colours; and all the raviſhing glories of his truth, wiſdom, l love, which ſhould powerfully draw our hearts to him, will be hid m our eyes. The luſtre of redeeming grace will in part, or wholly, eclipſed. Some parts of religion will be ſuperſtitiouſly magnified, ile others of greater conſequence will be undervalued.

Further, if for want of due attention to the ſenſe of Scripture we miſe and fall into error, we ought to be ſenſible, that religious error is a far worſe nature than any other; not only as it is error in a matter the greateſt importance, but as it is of all others the moſt difficult be corrected. For under the ſacred name of religion it ſhelters and ends itſelf, and gains the character of truth, of important, neceſſary, ful, and perhaps excellent truth; and the unwary think themſelves und in conſcience and duty to maintain it with zeal; and then, whoer endeavours to correct it, though ever ſo much in the ſpirit of meekſs and peace, muſt do it at his peril. Hence thoſe groſſer inſtances perſecution and bloodſhed which have fouled the Chriſtian name; nce thoſe wranglings, debates, heats, animoſities, which have deoyed Chriſtian ſocieties. Theſe things are the fruit of men's taking eir religious principles upon truſt, and not fetching them from the riptures, ſtudied, and underſtood by themſelves. Such contempt and glect of the word of God expoſeth them to ſtrong deluſion, and ſuch igion leads them to fight in the dark for they know not what. Thus igion is corrupted, the corruption of it defended, and irreligion and idelity propagated, even by religious people themſelves. So the ſcep, who is indifferent to any principles, when he finds abſurdity mixed th the Chriſtian faith, taking the whole for a true account of Chriſtity, rejects the whole; for even common ſenſe will not allow that velation to be divine, which cannot, in many of its parts, be reıciled with the known perfections of God.

By this unhappy means what numbers in our land have been wn into Deiſm! And, by this unhappy means, I gueſs, if the truth re known, religion appears but in a doubtful light to many who ſeem be ſtrict profeſſors of it; for where it is not received in its proper evince, there cannot be, I think, a full and ſtrong aſſent of faith; and man can receive it in its proper evidence, who doth not endeavour refully to underſtand the Scriptures.

Thus many who talk much of the word of God, and pretend a great verence for it, may poſſibly at the laſt day be ranked among the deſers of it; becauſe, although they have, perhaps, been much in read- of it, they never ſet themſelves in good earneſt to underſtand it, and in effect might as well not have read it at all; for their reading of it only from a ſuperſtitious opinion, as *Turks*, and *Jews*, and *Papiſts*, rn over the books in reputation among them, not from the love of ıth, not with a deſire to underſtand the truth; that moſt people ppoſe they underſtand before they read their bibles, or however with- t reading their bibles; not to open their eyes, and to give them a more

a more just and distinct view of the ways and dispensations of God, such things they learn from other books; not to confirm and establish their minds in the faith of God and of Christ; not for those purposes, I fear, are the Scriptures read, but only in a customary, superstitious, or however in a very careless, superficial way: and therefore there are so few Christians that grow in grace, that rise in spiritual strength, peace, love, and joy, because there are so few that grow in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. 2 *Pet.* iii. 18.

The full knowledge of Christ most people presume they have attained long ago; and to talk of knowing more of Christ, or in a clearer and more rational way, is perfectly shocking to them. They have somewhere or other fixed the precise standard of Divine knowledge, and either more or less than that standard of theirs is impious and heretical. How then can they grow in the knowledge of Christ? How can they set themselves to understand the Scriptures, who in another way, as they think, have already gained the whole sum and body of spiritual understanding? See *Rom.* xv. 4. *Whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning, for our instruction, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.* We have hope through that patience and comfort which is taught in the Scriptures; but the grounds and reasons of that patience and comfort must be understood, otherwise we cannot establish in our minds a sure and solid hope. Hence it is that the Christian hope, that faith and hope which overcometh the world, is so great a rarity; therefore so few rejoice in hope, because so few understand the Scriptures, which are the ground of the Christian hope. Lastly, because the Scriptures are but little understood, therefore they are so little valued. We delight not in them, because we know so little of them.

Let it be remembered, that we shall have the *benefit* of the Scriptures by studiously endeavouring to understand them. Then shall we know if we follow on to know the Lord. So far as we understand the word of truth, we shall be truly enlightened, our consciences will be rightly directed, and all our principles well established; we shall see its real excellency, and it will accordingly be valued and esteemed; we shall taste its comforts, feel its power, be convinced of its Divine original, and it will be pleasant and precious to us. The more we understand of the Scriptures, the more we shall with pleasure see the righteousness, wisdom, and goodness of all the Divine dispensations, that all of them are adjusted and settled by the love of a Father, and calculated to promote our happiness. This will draw our hearts to God, and shew us the infinite reasonableness of comporting with the constitutions of his grace.

If we are built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, our faith will stand upon a sure bottom, and not upon the weak, precarious judgment of man; henceforth we shall be no more children tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, *Ephes.* iv. 14. but shall by use have our senses exercised to discern both good and evil. Thus we shall with our own eyes see the truth, and be instrumental in preserving the purity of our religion. Thus we shall grow up into Christ in all things, in knowledge, in faith, and love. Thus we shall be rooted and grounded in love, in the love of God, of truth, and of

our

neighbour. The knowledge we gain, whether it be more or less, ng drawn from the true fountain, will compose our spirits, and in- e us neither to despise the weakness of those that know less, nor to ct the instructions of those that may know more than ourselves. These weighty considerations should engage us to read the Scriptures h all possible care and diligence, to study them with an upright de- to gain their true sense and meaning. We all know how much men at variance about the sense of Scripture, one affirming that this, ano- r that that is the true sense. So it may well be expected to be in our sent weakness; and so God hath permitted it to be; not to give us oc- ion to censure, judge, and disparage one another, as is too common, this is expressly forbidden; but this variety of sentiments is permitted, teach us to cease from man, and should convince us that we ought to resign our understandings or consciences to any man's judgment atsoever.

CHAP. XXXIX.

The History of REVELATION, *and some* OBJECTIONS *to it answered.*

I SHALL consider, first,

The authority and original of holy Scripture; and then,

The use and importance of it; it *is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, correction, for instruction in righteousness.* 2 Tim. iii. 16. and so is ofitable for the noblest purposes, the enlightening of our minds, the rifying of our hearts, the regulating of our practice, and the saving our souls.

As to the authority and original of holy Scripture, it is said, by a ry good and sufficient judge, that it *is given by inspiration of God.* How e are to understand being *given by inspiration of God*, the Apostle PETER ill inform us, 2 *Pet.* i. 20, 21. *Knowing this*, says he, *that no prophecy the Scripture is of any private interpretation*, sense, or impulse; mean- g, that no prophecy did issue or proceed from the private sense or oughts of the writer; it was not giving a loose to his own conceits d imaginations. *For*, as it follows, *the prophecy came not in old time by e will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the holy host*; or by the holy Spirit of God, enlightening their minds, and recting them what to say. Thus the Scriptures are inspired, they are e word of God; and what is contained in them, we are to understand d reverence, as spoken by God himself. But then, in the strictest sense, is is to be understood only of what *Prophets*, as Prophets, have deli- ered to us; such as *Moses, Samuel, David, Isaiah, Jeremiah*, and the rest.

No *prophecy* of Scripture did proceed from the private ſenſe of the writer, but was dictated by the ſpirit of God. But as for the hiſtorical writings, though, doubtleſs, they owe their original to the ſpecial Providence of God, yet it is ſufficient to ſuppoſe that they were wrote by men of probity, fully acquainted with the facts which they relate.

This premiſed, I ſhould now advance a few arguments to eſtabliſh the authority and excellency of the Scriptures, that they were indeed given by inſpiration of God, or that in them holy men of God ſpake as they were moved by the holy Spirit. But to prepare the way, it is neceſſary I ſhould give a general account and hiſtory of Revelation; then remove ſome Objections which are levelled againſt it, as if it were needleſs, too partial, or too ineffectual, to be conſiſtent with the Divine goodneſs; or as if we were not ſufficiently ſecure, that we now have in poſſeſſion thoſe very books entire and perfect, in which Revelation was originally recorded.

Revelation is that which makes known to us the will and ways of the moſt high God, the Father of the univerſe, the Fountain of all being and happineſs, upon whom we have a neceſſary dependence for life, for underſtanding, and knowledge, for well-being, and enjoyment, at all times and in every reſpect; for without him we cannot live, we cannot breathe, we can have no kind or degree of ſenſe and underſtanding. This is true. And it is equally true, that the beſt and moſt beneficent of Beings, the greateſt and the kindeſt of all Fathers, could have no other end or deſign in creating mankind, but his own glory, and their happineſs. The chief end of man muſt be to glorify God, and to enjoy him for ever; for perfect goodneſs cannot be conceived to propoſe any lower end in making a creature ſo noble and excellent. But then it is certain, both from the holineſs of God, and the nature of an intelligent rational being, that a character of holineſs and virtue, of obedience, righteouſneſs, or right conduct, is neceſſary, on our part, to our enjoyment of God, or our happineſs in his favour and bleſſing. It is neceſſary that we love the great Author of our being, that we pay him all due honour and obedience, that we are dutifully ſubmiſſive to his will, that we underſtand our dependence upon him, and what we have to expect from him, that we may be excited to gratitude, and a due improvement of his benefits.

We cannot love, honour, and obey God, unleſs we know him, and are acquainted with him; nor can we poſſibly have any knowledge or underſtanding, of any kind whatever, but what muſt come originally from God. Therefore, that God, our Father, ſhould inſtruct and teach his creatures, whom he has made for the higheſt and nobleſt ends, in thoſe things which immediately relate to his glory and their happineſs, is perfectly conſonant to his goodneſs and love. And that Infinite wiſdom, the Lord and Proprietor of all Being, ſhould have various ways of making known himſelf and his will to us, is alſo perfectly true. He hath produced a great variety of creatures with different powers and inſtincts in our world, by them to ſhew that he can beſtow upon us any kind or degree of being; he hath diſplayed his immenſe greatneſs, power, wiſdom, and goodneſs, in the numberleſs glorious bodies which, by his hand, are perpetually rolled about us in the heavens. His continually

providing

oviding for our subsistence, in a way which is quite out of our power, ainly demonstrates our absolute dependence upon him, and obligations him. This is the book of nature spread before all nations, and le- ble to every understanding; in which every attentive mind may read e perfections of God, and the main duties which we owe him. But, him who made our senses and minds, and is always intimate to them, ere must be many other possible ways of making known his will to us; by an audible voice, a vision, or secret impressions upon our spirits. herefore, to believe that God, at sundry times, and in divers manners, ake to the ancient fathers by the Prophets, is believing a thing very ssible, reasonable, and fitting.

And it is no improbable supposition, that in the earliest ages of the orld, God should only communicate his will to pious men, and leave em to hand it down to others by tradition; for in those days the lon- evity of mankind favoured this manner of conveyance. With our and parent *Adam*, *Methuselah* lived 243 years; with *Methuselah*, *Shem* e son of *Noah* lived about 97 years; and with *Shem*, *Jacob* the son of *aac*, the son of *Abraham*, lived 50 years, as appears from the history of *enesis*. So that no more than three persons, *Methuselah*, *Shem*, and *acob*, were sufficient to hand down the knowledge and worship of the ue God from *Adam* to the time when the children of *Israel* went down to *Egypt*, that is, through the space of 2238 years. But when the life f man was reduced to the narrow period of fourscore years, and the orld on all sides was fallen into various sorts of corruption, and idola- y and ignorance of God generally prevailed among the nations, tra- tion evidently ceased to be a safe mean of conveyance.

It was then the Divine wisdom judged it a proper time to erect a pe- uliar kingdom, church, or congregation, in the world; and for its lumination gave the knowledge of his will and worship in writing, by he hand of his servant *Moses*; that by such writing, or scripture, di- ine truth might more easily be preserved, be further spread, and, when ost, more easily restored. This must be acknowledged a wise and pro- er expedient. After the time of *Moses*, God was pleased to give Reve- tions to the subsequent Prophets, as occasion required; till in the ful- ess of time, the great Prophet, the Son of God, came into the world, pened a new dispensation, and all the treasures of the Divine grace, hich had not before been so clearly made known to the church and eople of God. And what he and his Apostles taught is also com- itted to writing, and completes what we call the Canon of Scrip- ure.

This is the general account and history of Revelation which I pro- osed to give. And we may here observe, that a written Revelation and he church of God are co-existent; that is to say, at the same time the hurch was brought into the world, the Scriptures were brought into he church; and both are so essentially connected, that take away the ne and you take away the other. Take away the Scriptures, and we re reduced to the state of mere nature; our charter is destroyed, and ur polity, as we are God's church and kingdom, is overthrown. We ay indeed, possibly, pretend, as the Papists do, that we are, though eprived of the Scripture, still a church; yet without the Scriptures, as

our rule and foundation, we are not the church of God, but under a different head, it may be the Pope, or ſome other uſurped authority. But this by the bye.

I ſhall now remove ſome Objections which may be levelled againſt Revelation in general.

It is pretended——*To be quite needleſs, nature and reaſon being ſufficient to direct any man in the plain way of his duty, without any ſupernatural aſſiſtance.* I anſwer——It muſt be allowed, in general, that nature and reaſon are ſufficient to direct any man in the way of his duty, ſo far as God, in his circumſtances, expects duty from him; for God expects duty from every perſon only in proportion to the light he enjoys, and to the talents he hath received. But the experience of all mankind ſhews that nature and reaſon, by themſelves, will advance but a little way in the knowledge of Divine things. Gentlemen in a land like ours, where, in ſpite of themſelves, their nature and reaſon is enlightened and directed in a conſiderable degree by Revelation, may talk of the perfection and ſufficiency of nature and reaſon.

If we look into thoſe nations which are perfect ſtrangers to Revelation, we ſhall find them groſsly ignorant of the being, unity, and perfections of God, the diſpenſations of his Providence, the proper honour and worſhip that is due to him, the prayers we may addreſs to his goodneſs, and the hopes we may entertain of his acceptance. They know nothing of the pardon of ſin, the promiſes of God's mercy and bleſſing, nor of any thing belonging to the covenant of his love, the preſent privileges, or future glory of his kingdom. The reſurrection from the dead, the day of judgment, the immortal life, which will be the reward of piety and virtue, and the death everlaſting, which will be the ſad lot of all the impenitentially wicked, they are altogether, or in a great meaſure, unacquainted with. But all theſe are great principles in religion, and of great force to purify our ſpirits, ennoble our minds, animate our hopes, and guard us againſt the influence of bodily appetites, and the violence of temptation.

And however others may fare, in a great degree of darkneſs and ignorance, through the favourable allowance of God, yet ſurely every man's reaſon will tell him, that ſuperior knowledge, and a more extenſive view of the Divine diſpenſations, is abſolutely neceſſary to a higher degree of goodneſs, comfort, obedience, and devotedneſs to God. What the poets relate may be true, that ſome primitive mortals ſubſiſted only upon acorns and water, in dens and caves; and we know there are ſome parts of the world where the naked inhabitants enjoy very few conveniences of life; but ſhall we therefore deſpiſe the bleſſings of agriculture, and the various accommodations which make life happy and comfortable, and ſay they are needleſs? Would any man in *England* ever think of turning out naked into the fields and woods, becauſe it is poſſible, and may ſomewhere in fact be true, that men may live upon wild fruit and water, without clothes, or any habitation but the dens and caves of the earth? Corn and other agreeable food, clothes, and commodious habitations, fitted up with proper furniture and utenſils, are neceſſary to our kind and and degree of life in the natural world; and ſo is Revelation to a correſponding kind and degree of ſpiritual life. The

food,

od, raiment, and habitations we enjoy, are the gift of God's goodneſs, d it is our duty to accept and uſe them with thankfulneſs. In like anner, Revelation is the gift of God, and, as ſuch, it ought to be re-ived; and as it gives greater light, we are obliged to attend accord-gly to it, becauſe we muſt, in the nature of things, be accountable r it.

I may add upon this head, that however nature and reaſon, in their re and moſt perfect ſtate, may be ſufficient to direct in the way of ty, yet, when nature is corrupted, and reaſon obſcured, or almoſt quite tinguiſhed, they are by no means ſufficient to reſtore and recover emſelves to the knowledge and obedience of the truth; becauſe they emſelves, who ſhould be the phyſician to heal themſelves, are ſick and ſabled. But it was the primary intention of Revelation to reſtore and eſerve the knowledge of God and of his will in a corrupt and dege-erate world.

So far therefore I ſee no objection againſt Revelation, but it may be th very needful, and a very great bleſſing to mankind.

It may be ſaid——*If this bleſſing was given to all mankind, who all ually ſtand in need of it; but whereas it is confined only to a part of man-nd, while others are left to grope in the dark, how can it be accounted the ft of Divine goodneſs? For is not God equally the God, Father, and Sa-our of all men? How then can it be conſiſtent with his beneficence to con-e the light of Revelation to ſome, which would ſo much contribute to the ppineſs of all? May we not then conclude, that a partial Revelation is no evelation from God, nor worthy of our regard?*

I anſwer——It is very certain that God is the Saviour of all men, at he is good to all, and that his tender mercies are over all his works. ut while we are ſure of this, we are not equally ſure that our reaſon a perfect rule for adjuſting the diſtribution of his benefits: on the her hand, we may be ſure that it is not. From the loweſt to the gheſt degree of exiſtence, from a grain of ſand to the moſt glorious ngel in heaven, every higher degree of being is an inconteſtable proof at God may very juſtly, according to his own wiſdom and good plea-re, beſtow what gifts, endowments, privileges, and advantages upon s creatures he ſees fit. He is debtor to none. Our underſtanding is measure of his wiſdom, neither are his diſpenſations to be cenſured our narrow and imperfect judgments. And methinks, we may as ell make it an objection againſt the goodneſs of Divine Providence, at all men are not rich alike, wiſe alike, or knowing and learned ike.

Would you not think him a very fooliſh man, who ſhould be diſpleaſed at God has made him rich, and placed him in eaſy circumſtances, cauſe there are many about him in a poor low condition? Who re-ſes wealth, or objects againſt plenty, becauſe his neighbours are pinch-, and make but a hard ſhift to get a living? Or who can be ſo ab-rd, as to reckon his ſuperior knowledge and learning to be no valu-le advantage, becauſe there are numbers of illiterate perſons, who are uch below him in underſtanding? or that the poſſeſſion of reaſon is bleſſing, becauſe there are ſo many idiots to be found among man-nd? Or can you ſuppoſe there are any of the angelic body, or of thoſe

ſpirits who excel us in all endowments and happineſs, who deſpiſe their own bleſſings and heavenly felicity, as no gifts of the Divine bounty, becauſe we in this earth are not ſet upon a level with them? And is it notas fooliſh and abſurb to deny Revelation, or to argue againſt it, as improperly beſtowed, and unworthy of the Divine goodneſs, becauſe indeed it is not communicated to all the world, as well as to ourſelves? It is very unnatural to diſpute againſt God's goodneſs in any ſhape, and very preſumptuous to direct him how to beſtow it, either as to quantity, quality, or extent. If it is fact that he has given us any bleſſing, our duty ſurely is to be thankful, and to enjoy and improve it, whether he has beſtowed more or leſs upon our fellow-creatures; being certain, where leſs is given, leſs will be required; and that the Judge of the whole earth will, in the laſt day, deal with all in perfect equity and goodneſs. But,

If Revelation is ſuch a bleſſing, ſurely it would appear in the fruit or effects of it. Whereas great numbers, if not the generality of thoſe who enjoy Revelation, are as bad as the very heathen, who are ſtrangers to it. And ſuch evils have been produced, ſuch variance, diſcord, and bloody perſecutions, on account of revealed religion, that it may juſtly be queſtioned, whether it has not done more harm than good. What reaſon then have we to ſay, it is a valuable gift, or worthy of the Father of the univerſe?

To this I reply——That natural cauſes, by a ſort of neceſſity, produce their proper effects; ſo fire always burns combuſtible matter, and a good medicine heals a diſeaſe; and that is no fire which will not burn proper matter, nor that a good medicine which never heals a diſeaſe. But moral cauſes are of a different nature, becauſe their efficacy depends upon the choice and diſpoſition of the ſubjects to whom they are applied; and therefore a moral means, or cauſe, may be in itſelf moſt excellent, though it happens to produce no good effect; nay, though accidentally it may prove the occaſion of very bad effects. Our Lord's miniſtry and doctrine was perfectly divine, and yet it had but ſmall influence for good upon the *Jewiſh* nation; nay, on the other hand, excited their malice to that degree, that they ſlew the Prince of Life.

Whatever effects therefore Revelation may have produced in the world, ſtill it is true, that it is a valuable gift, and worthy of the Divine goodneſs. But it muſt ever be remembered, that it is abſolutely neceſſary to our receiving any benefit from Goſpel means, that we be truly deſirous to ſhake off the yoke of ſin, and to cultivate and improve our minds in virtue and true holineſs. If therefore we expect there is any life or power provided in the Goſpel, which will anticipate our own thoughts and concerns, or that will begin to work upon our minds, and excite them to thoughtfulneſs and care, whilſt we ourſelves are thoughtleſs and unconcerned, we ſhall but deceive ourſelves. For ſure I am, there is nothing in the Goſpel that encourages ſuch an expectation: on the contrary, ſuch an expectation is utterly inconſiſtent with the grand deſign of revealing the grace and mercy of God; which is, to awaken our conſciences, and to excite us to care and diligence in our ſpiritual concerns.

The notion I have juſt now mentioned, manifeſtly tends to lull us aſleep in ſecurity and indolence; and encourages to go on in the contempt

npt of God and our own ſalvation; or in any of the paths of folly d ſin, upon a preſumption that we can never turn out, till we are nſtrained by ſome uncertain, unaccountable act of Almighty power. ue indeed, our own thoughts, deſires, and endeavours, will effect but tle, without the help of Divine power: but yet, if we chooſe to live ignorance, unbelief, or any branch of impiety and wickedneſs; if r hearts are ſo attached to the world, ſo engroſſed by buſineſs, ſenſual eaſures and amuſements, that we can ſpare no ſerious reflections for od, our ſouls, and a future world; I cannot ſee how we ſhould be ved by any grace which the Goſpel has provided in Jeſus Chriſt.

It is certain, the Goſpel hath produced many good effects, and will ways do ſo, where it is received and attended to. For as for thoſe etended Chriſtians who make it the occaſion of variance, hatred, and rſecution, we cannot, with any juſtice or propriety, ſay, that they receive or attend to Revelation; nay, it is very certain that in fact ey do not. Nor muſt we allow, that in Popiſh countries, where cor- ption of manners greatly prevails, and ſuperſtition, idolatry, and per- cution are eſtabliſhed, they enjoy the benefit of Revelation, when we ow, that for many ages the uſe of the Scriptures hath been forbidden, d a religion taught and profeſſed, which is quite foreign to the word God.

But how can we be ſure, that we have now in poſſeſſion, thoſe very books, tire and perfect, in which Revelation was originally recorded? May they t in length of time be loſt, or quite altered from what they were at firſt? ſo varied and changed by tranſcribers and tranſlators, that we can never ſure that we have the true and genuine ſenſe of Scripture?

I anſwer——No nation in the world can be more ſure of any of their ublic acts and records, preſerved in their archives with the utmoſt re, than we are of the truth of the Scriptures now in our hands. The *ews* preſerved the book of *Moſes*, as the laws of their kingdom, in ne moſt ſacred part of the tabernacle and temple; thoſe books, the ſalms and Prophets, were every where publicly read in their ſyna- ogues, every week, on the ſabbath-day; their learned men, with the tmoſt exactneſs and ſcrupuloſity, inſpected and guarded the text, even far as to count the very number of letters in every book. In ſhort, ur Lord and the Apoſtles frequently quote *Moſes*, the *Pſalms*, and *rophets*, without any intimation that thoſe books were in any reſpect tered or depraved. Whereas, had they indeed been corrupted, we need ot doubt but our bleſſed Saviour would have reformed that as well s, or rather, more than any other inſtance of corruption among the *ews*.

From our Lord's time, the Scriptures of the Old Teſtament were ublicly read by the Jews in all parts of the world; and thoſe Scriptures, nd the Apoſtolic writings, as they came out, were read by Chriſtians very where in their aſſemblies, and diſperſed over all the world, where ne religion of Jeſus was profeſſed, as containing the laws and rules of ne religion he taught: inſomuch that it was impoſſible to corrupt or eprave them. And for that reaſon, even the church of ROME, or hoſe who erected that Antichriſtian power, never durſt attempt to make he leaſt alteration in the Scriptures, as knowing it would be to no pur-

poſe; but inſtead of that, they claimed the ſole right of interpreting the Scriptures, which ſerved their ends full as well as corrupting them. For he who hath power to put what ſenſe he pleaſes upon a law, may as effectually make it void, as he who deſtroys it.

And as for tranſcribers, or tranſlators, it is for the ſame reaſon impoſſible they ſhould make any material alterations. And it is in fact true, that they have not; for you may take any tranſlation, in any language, or by any party among Chriſtians, Papiſts as well as Proteſtants, and you will find they all agree in all things relating to the covenant of the Lord our God, and the ſeveral duties to which we are thereby obliged, though they may differ in ſome things, and Commentators may put their own ſenſe upon others. But the main things, I am well ſatisfied, have been preſerved pure and entire in every tranſlation, from the beginning to this day.

Thus the Objections againſt Revelation in general, which are all that I have heard of, are removed, I hope to ſatisfaction. Upon the whole, they ſeem to me to proceed not from a ſober mind, ſincerely deſirous of the beſt knowledge and inſtruction; for how can one allow him to be a true ſcholar, or ſincerely deſirous of improving in uſeful learning, who, meeting with a book excellently adapted to that purpoſe, refuſes to make uſe of it, becauſe he is already poſſeſſed of the faculty of reaſon, or becauſe it is not in the hands of every body, or becauſe ſome have made a bad uſe of it, or becauſe he doubts whether it may not have undergone ſome alterations; when the book, in itſelf conſidered, is an excellent performance, and capable of giving him the moſt profitable inſtruction?

The Bible, as we now have it in our hands, thanks be to God, is by far the moſt excellent book in our language; and, as we have it in our tranſlation, is in itſelf, ſetting aſide all circumſtances, a pure and plentiful fountain of Divine knowledge, giving a true, clear, and full account of the Divine diſpenſations, and particularly of the Goſpel of our ſalvation. So that whoever ſtudies the Bible, the Engliſh Bible, is ſure of gaining the knowledge and faith which, if duly applied to the heart and converſation, will infallibly guide him to eternal life. For which reaſon it is our wiſdom and duty, to be much in reading and meditating upon the Bible, that our minds being well furniſhed with heavenly wiſdom, and our hearts tinctured with a Divine Spirit, we may be prepared for glory, honour, and immortality.

CHAP. XL.

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at the Scriptures are given by INSPIRATION *of God, appears from the expreſs and frequent Aſſertions of* Moſes, *the* Prophets *and* Apoſtles.

HAVE already given a general account and hiſtory of revelation; and have ſhewn that it is perfectly conſonant to the goodneſs and e of God, to the relation in which we ſtand in to him, and the gh and glorious purpoſes for which he has given us our being; and at he committed revelation to writing at a very proper time, when e ſhortneſs of human life, and the general corruption of the world, ndered tradition no longer a ſafe mean of conveyance; and when e kingdom or peculiar congregation he had erected, required a ſtand- g light for the preſervation of divine truth.

I have likewiſe endeavoured to remove ſome objections againſt revela- n in general.

On this head I would beg leave to repeat, that never were any books re publicly and commonly known, being read and heard with the ateſt reverence once every week, in both *Jewiſh* and *Chriſtian* aſſem- es, for a very long tract of time, the Old Teſtament before the coming our Lord, and the Old and New after his coming, to this very day. that it is, in the nature of things, impoſſible that the holy Scriptures ould be adulterated; nor could any man, who had a mind to alter or rrupt them, promiſe himſelf ſucceſs in an attempt which muſt imme- tely be detected, and confounded, by thouſands of copies every where perſed, and conſtantly read before numerous aſſemblies, in the various guages of even more nations than ever compoſed the Roman empire its largeſt extent.

Tranſcribers may indeed make literal miſtakes, but thoſe are eaſily rrected by a variety of manuſcripts; and tranſlators may differ in ing the literal ſenſe of ſome words and phraſes, but not ſo as to render e main ſubjects and ſubſtance of the Scriptures either obſcure or uncer- n. For you may take any tranſlations in any language, or done by y party among Chriſtians, and you will find they all agree in all things ating to the covenant of the Lord our God, the ſtate of things in a ture world, and the ſeveral duties to which we are obliged, though ey may not render the letter of the text in the ſame words, nor with e ſame propriety of expreſſion. The more perfect and exact in all ngs any tranſlation is, the better it is; but I am very ſure, that all ngs pertaining to the diſpenſations of God, his grace and promiſes, d our hopes and duty, have been preſerved pure and entire in every nſlation, from the beginning to this day. And this is abundantly ough for our inſtruction, comfort, direction, and edification.

Gentlemen in foreign buſineſs, who do not underſtand foreign lan- ages, are obliged to carry it on by the help of tranſlations; and if etter in *Italian*, *German*, *Spaniſh*, or *French*, was put in the hands of enty tranſlators, there are great odds but every tranſlation would

differ, more or leſs, in ſome expreſſions. The ſame words or phraſes would hardly be rendered in the ſame manner by every one of the tranſlators; and yet they might all agree with reſpect to the ſenſe of the merchant: and that being all this correſpondent wants to underſtand, he will never think it worth his while to enter into minute particulars, or a critical propriety of phraſes, which have nothing to do with his buſineſs. Juſt ſo it is with reference to the tranſlation of the Bible. In above the ſpace of an hundred years, learning may have received conſiderable improvements, and by that means ſome inaccuracies may be found in a tranſlation more than a hundred years old. But you may reſt fully ſatisfied, that as our Engliſh tranſlation is, in itſelf, by far the moſt excellent book in our language, ſo it is a pure and plentiful fountain of Divine knowledge, giving a true, clear, and full account of the Divine diſpenſations, and particularly of the Goſpel of our ſalvation; inſomuch that whoever ſtudies the Bible, the Engliſh Bible, is ſure of gaining that knowledge and faith which, if duly applied to the heart and converſation, will infallibly guide him to eternal life.

[But you may ſay, how then comes it to paſs, that learned men differ ſo much about the ſenſe of Scripture? I anſwer—They differ not ſo much about the literal ſenſe, or tranſlation of Scripture, as about the conſtruction which they put upon the literal ſenſe. For example, all are agreed that thoſe words, *Take, eat, this is my body, which is broken for you*, are rightly and well tranſlated; but the queſtion is, what is the meaning of them? The Papiſt will tell you, they mean, that the bread in the Lord's-ſupper is really turned into the body, ſoul, and divinity of Chriſt; the Proteſtant very juſtly denieth the monſtrous and idolatrous abſurdity, and affirms, that the bread is only a figurative repreſentation of Chriſt's ſacrificed body. Tranſlators are generally pretty well agreed, but divines differ very much about the ſenſe of Scripture, which may afterwards be conſidered.]

Thus, by demonſtrating the reaſonableneſs and expediency of revelation in general, by removing objections againſt it, and by ſhewing the ſufficiency of the tranſlation, which, thanks to God, is in all our hands, the way is prepared —

To advance a few arguments to eſtabliſh the authority and excellency of the Scriptures; that they were indeed given by Inſpiration of God, or that, in them, holy men of God ſpake as they were moved by the holy Spirit.

We have ſufficient reaſon to believe that we have in our hands the very books that were written by *Moſes*, by the Prophets, and by the Apoſtles of Chriſt. Now, that thoſe books were given by Inſpiration of God, or that the perſons who wrote them have delivered to us what they received from heaven, will appear —

From their own expreſs and frequent aſſertions. *Moſes* and the Prophets always declare they ſpake in the name of the Lord, and delivered to the people what they received in commiſſion from him; the Apoſtles likewiſe aſſure us, that they were taught by Jeſus Chriſt, the Son of God, were endued with the Spirit of God, and commiſſioned by him to preach the Goſpel to all nations. And we have all the reaſon in the world to believe they have told us the truth; for, if they have not, they

must

t be very bad, designing men, who solemnly and publicly fathered n God, constitutions, laws, doctrines, and declarations which they w very well were false and fictitious, the creatures of their own in- tion, obtruded upon the world to serve some selfish, sinister purposes. , for any thing we can see, they appear to be persons of the highest racter for honour and probity. In the whole of their conduct we find utmost integrity and disinterestedness, and in every part of their his- y and writings the utmost simplicity and impartiality.

We may carry this argument further, and set it in a still stronger light he case of the *Prophets*. For if, when they declared they spake in he name of God, and by a commission from him, they declared a false- od, they must certainly know that it was a falsehood; and if they knew vas a falsehood, they were not only very wicked, but even void of nmon sense. For the Prophets, in a long series one after another, nothing by speaking in the name of the Lord, but scorn and con- mpt from the generality of their countrymen. When they entered on the ungrateful office, they renounced all worldly views, and re harrassed and persecuted in proportion to their fidelity in executing

Now this is too much by far for any pious fraud to bear, even in e case of a single person, much more in a series of succession of men several generations. An impostor, like *Mahomet*, may carry his pre- nces very high, but he can never bear the furnace of persecution: at terrible scourge will either silence his false and arrogant claims, or ce him to take up arms, if it is in his power, for his own vindication d security. But the Prophets were naked men, who, without the least pendence upon worldly power or policy, opposed nothing but a divine mmission to very unkind and severe usage. Now there is nothing to found in human nature, or in any supposable state of things, that n possibly account for this conduct, but either that really they had a vine commission, or else that they were disordered in their heads, and d lost their senses. But their writings prove they were men of good nse, and of a sound and excellent judgment; therefore, nothing re- ains but that they really acted by a divine commission.

The force of this argument will be seen even still more evidently in e case of the *Apostles*. No history in the world has been better pre- rved than that of the New Testament. There we find that Jesus hrist had gathered, while he was upon earth, some hundreds of Dis- ples, who all of them made profession of faith in him immediately after s death, declaring that he was risen from the dead, and ascended into eaven. Particularly, the Apostles, with several others, went about eaching the Gospel, first in *Judea*, then in all parts of the *Roman* em- re, persuading men to believe in Christ, affirming that he was the Son God, that all the wonderful things related of him were true, and at they had a commission from Heaven to teach, spread, and propagate is religion every where, though they knew they should every where meet ith the most violent opposition, and the cruelest treatment. Now, ey must either be fully convinced in their own minds that their asser- ons were true; or, if they knew that the Gospel, and their commis- on to preach it, was a forgery, we must conclude they were distracted,

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and had loſt the uſe of underſtanding and reaſon. For ſuppoſing our bleſſed Lord never did or ſaid any of thoſe things which the Apoſtles repeated, and that they had no inſtructions or commiſſion from him to preach the Goſpel, then we muſt ſuppoſe they entered into a fooliſh and frantic confederacy after this manner :—

" Men and Brethren, what that ſeducer was, who lived among us " the other day, and how juſtly he ſuffered death for his vile impoſture, " we, of all men living, have moſt reaſon to know ; and though others, " who were leſs intimately acquainted with him, and his ways of " deceiving, might have ſome opinion of his worth and honeſty, yet we, " who were the daily companions of his converſation, ſaw nothing in " him anſwerable to the greatneſs of his pretenſions, but that his deſign " was, by all the boldeſt arts of craft and hypocriſy, to get a name in " the world : and therefore let us enter into the moſt ſolemn agreement " to propagate the belief of this notorious cheat among mankind, and " to feign all manner of lies in its confirmation ; to aver that we ſaw " him reſtore eyes to the blind, ears to the deaf, and life to the dead ; " and though it be all falſe, yet let us confidently report and aſſert it to " the very laſt drop of our blood.

" And becauſe, after all his great and glorious pretences of being no " leſs than the Son of God, he was at laſt executed as a vile malefac- " tor, with all the circumſtances of ſhame and diſhonour, we muſt " agree among ourſelves upon ſome ſtory to wipe off this diſgrace. Let " us therefore reſolve to affirm, with undaunted ſteadineſs, that after " he was thus diſhonourably crucified, the third day he roſe again ; " often converſed with us, in the ſame familiar way as he had always " done before his execution ; and that, after a while, we ſaw him " aſcend up into heaven. But then, we muſt be ſure to ſtand unalter- " ably to this bold falſehood, and perſevere to death itſelf in the aſſer- " tion. For what abſurdity is there in throwing away our lives, with " no other proſpect than that of final perdition ? And why ſhould any " man think it hard to ſuffer ſtripes, bonds, impriſonments, reproaches, " diſhonour, and death itſelf, with this view only ?"

This, or ſomething like it, muſt be the ſenſe and reſolution of the Apoſtles and firſt preachers of the Goſpel, upon ſuppoſition they knew and believed that the Goſpel, and their commiſſion to preach it, was a forgery. In this caſe, a ſet of men in private and low life, without any manner of worldly power or intereſt ; in the certain proſpect of all manner of oppoſition, of ſacrificing all that is dear and valuable in life, of ſuffering all manner of indignities, tribulations, and cruelties, and of expoſing themſelves to all the terrors of death ; muſt agree together to propagate throughout the whole world a ſyſtem of falſehood, knowing it to be ſuch, directly contrary to their own conſciences, and to all their intereſts both in this and a future world.

None but a company of madmen, ſeized with the moſt extravagant frenzy, and void of all ſenſe and reaſon, could poſſibly join in ſuch a deſign. Whereas, if we peruſe their writings, we ſhall find that the Apoſtles were men of the fineſt ſenſe ; not only in full poſſeſſion of underſtanding, but endowed with knowledge and wiſdom in a degree far beyond the moſt eminent philoſophers, or maſters of reaſon, that ever had

been in the world. They had a ſurpriſing acquaintance with God the perfections of his nature; they ſet the diſpenſations of his wiſ-, and the grand deſigns of his love, in the cleareſt and moſt amiable t; they well underſtood the whole ſyſtem of morality, and fixed every ich of it upon its proper foundation: upon principles either ſelf-ent or allowed, they demonſtrate and eſtabliſh the whole ſcheme of Goſpel. The Apoſtles were ſo far from being void of common e, that they were, in fact, men of the beſt ſenſe, of the moſt accu- and ſublime knowledge, of the moſt excellent and divine ſpirit, to their Lord and Maſter, that the world ever was acquainted with. erefore their eſpouſing and aſſerting the Goſpel with ſo much zeal ld not proceed from any diſorder in their heads.

There remains then but one other cauſe to which it can poſſibly be gned, and it is this, that they were fully perſuaded of the truth of t they reported. And if they were fully perſuaded of the truth of what reported, then it follows, that what they reported was certainly . They were fully ſatisfied that it was true, and they were per-ly capable of receiving the cleareſt evidence, and fulleſt ſatisfaction; obſerve, what they reported was not a matter of mere opinion, n the caſe of *ſuperſtition*, nor a warm ſuggeſtion or ſecret impulſe n their minds, as in the caſe of *enthuſiaſm*, but bare ſimple matter fact. *We cannot*, ſay they, *but ſpeak the things which we have ſeen heard.* Acts iv. 20. They were things, not which they conceited, or cied, but which all of them, which great multitudes of all ſorts of ple, had often and openly, for the ſpace of three or four years ether, ſeen with their eyes, and heard with their ears. And that y were not miſtaken, or deceived, they were ſo fully ſatisfied, that y ventured all they had in the world, and life itſelf, upon the truth what they had heard and ſeen. Conſequently, their aſſurance muſt n the higheſt and fulleſt degree of ſatisfaction, leaving no room for ubt or uncertainty.

However ſome nowadays may cavil and object, it is certain the oſtles, who were the familiar companions of our Lord, had not the t ſcruple or difficulty about any thing related in the Goſpel. They e perfectly ſatisfied they ſaw Chriſt upon earth; that they converſed h him; that they heard the gracious words which proceeded from his uth; that they ſaw him work all his miracles; that they ſaw him cified and dead; that they ſaw him alive again within a few days; t they heard him give then a commiſſion to preach the Goſpel to all ions, and promiſe them ſucceſs; that they actually ſaw him aſcend up o heaven; that the Holy Ghoſt actually fell upon them on the day of ntecoſt; and that by his influences they actually felt themſelves owed with new and miraculous powers, which accompanied them ing the courſe of their miniſtry. And, to their being fully per-ded of the truth of theſe things, and to no other poſſible cauſe, can aſſign their ſteady and zealous endeavours to publiſh and ſpread the ſpel every where.

Add to all this, that the Apoſtles were ſurpriſingly ſucceſsful in preach-the Goſpel. Theſe men in private and low life, theſe defenceleſs n, quite deſtitute of all temporal power and intereſt, only by the force

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of truth, the truth of the Gospel which they preached, and the pow which they received from their Master, after he was gone to heave encountered the fury of the multitude, the most inveterate prejudices the whole world, the zeal of superstition, the hatred of the *Jews*, th contempt of the *Greeks*, the power of the *Romans*, the pride of the *ph losophers*, and the policy of *statesmen*; all these difficulties they encoun tered, and surmounted them all. The doctrine they taught, like th sun, enlightened the whole world, in a manner, all at once; and infini multitudes of people, both from city and villages, were, by the Apostl preaching, brought into the church, like corn into a granary.

All this, taken together, amounts to a sufficient proof, that th Apostles are to be credited when they affirm, that they received the instructions and commission from the Son of God; and upon the foot this argument alone, I am, for my own part, as fully convinced tha the Apostles were inspired by the Spirit of God, and that they have i their writings infallibly delivered the truth, in all things pertaining t the Christian faith and doctrine, as I am of any mathematical propositio or that twice two is equal to four. The proof indeed is of a differen kind, but fully convincing and satisfactory.

And if our Lord came from God to teach us the truth, and if hi Apostles received from him their instructions, commission, and the hol Spirit, then it follows, that the books of *Moses*, and of the Prophets are undoubtedly the word of God, and that the sacred history may b depended upon as a true account of things; for those books are not onl asserted by our Lord, and his Apostles in general, to be the word o God, given by Divine inspiration, and a true rule of knowledge, faith and doctrine, but particular passages are frequently produced in proof o confirmation of the doctrine they taught; and almost every single pa of the history, from the beginning to the end, as of *Adam*, *Enoch*, *Noah* the *Deluge*, *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*, *Abraham*, the *Israelites*, and their mi raculous deliverance from *Egypt* and settlement in the land of *Canaan* and all the surprising events in their story, are referred to as true an authentic.

What Jesus Christ and his Apostles have reported and taught in th books of the New Testament, is certainly the truth, as they received i from God. And if so, then the Scriptures of the Old Testament ar also given by inspiration of God, a storehouse of sacred and religiou knowledge, of undoubted credit and veracity; for our Lord and hi Apostles have represented and established them as such.

Thus the frequent and express assertions of *Moses*, the *Prophets* and the *Apostles*, taken in connexion with their proper circumstan ces, is a proof of the truth of revelation as it stands in the Scrip tures.

Let me recommend it to your serious consideration, that we certainl have in our hands an inestimable treasure, a revelation from heaven, sure word of prophesy, shining as a light in a dark place; a magazin of the most excellent knowledge, clearly displaying the Divine natur and perfections, opening fully the dispensations of his wisdom and good ness from the beginning of the world, shewing the riches of his grac and love to mankind; delivering the most excellent precepts of wisdom

truth

th, and holineſs, for the purifying our hearts, and directing our nverſation; and propoſing the nobleſt motives to engage us to, and courage us in, the practice of all virtue and goodneſs. We cannot er-value this bleſſing, neither can we deſpiſe it without great guilt. e are accountable to God for the uſe we make of it. Let us eſteem n proportion to its worth, and ſtudy it as the rule of our life, as the nd ſource of our comfort and hope, and as an infallible guide to rnal glory.

CHAP. XLI.

e Divi e Original and Authority of the Scriptures, proved from the Harmony and Agreement of the ſeveral WRITERS *of them.*

HAVING gone through the firſt argument, I proceed——To prove the Divine Original and Authority of the Scriptures; which may do from the Harmony and Agreement of the ſeveral Writers of em.

They are not a book compiled by a ſingle author, nor by many hands ing in confederacy in the ſame age; in which caſe there would be no ficulty in compoſing a conſiſtent ſcheme, nor would it be any wonder find the ſeveral parts in a juſt and cloſe connexion: but the Scriptures re done by ſeveral hands, in very different conditions of life, from the rone and ſceptre down to the loweſt degree, and in very diſtant ages, rough the long ſpace of about 1500 years, when the world muſt have t on a quite new face, and men muſt have different intereſts to purſue; ich naturally would have led a ſpirit of impoſture to have varied its emes, and to have adapted them to different ſtations in the world, d to the different turns and changes in every age.

David wrote about 400 years after *Moſes*, and *Iſaiah* about 250 after *avid*, and *Matthew* more than 700 years after *Iſaiah*; and yet theſe thors, with all the other Prophets and Apoſtles, write in perfect Harny, confirming the Authority of their predeceſſors, labouring to uce the people to the obſervance of their inſtructions, and loudly claiming againſt the neglect and contempt of them, and denouncing ſevereſt judgments upon ſuch as continued diſobedient.

This was the principal work of the Prophets in a long ſucceſſion. nd it is well known our Lord came not to deſtroy the Law and the ophets, but to fulfil, *i. e.* to vindicate and illuſtrate their meaning, to mplete what was imperfect, and to anſwer the higheſt ends of what s typical and figurative. Now, this is a very ſtrong proof that the riptures were throughout dictated by one and the ſame ſpirit, which uld be no other then the Spirit of God, and of truth. It is allowed, n the caſe of *Mahometiſm*, that an impoſture, or religious fraud, may be

be handed down from one age to another, but not by several differer persons, all making equal pretensions to a Divine authority and commi sion. For in this case they are to be considered, not as a succession teachers, deriving their doctrine from one common original, but single and distinct impostors; and consequently, every one in a distar age, and in a quite different state of things, would set up for himsel and seek a singular glory by building upon a distinct and separate foun dation from others. It would signify little to an impostor, who has n other intention but to advance his own honour and renown, to preten a commission from heaven, only to give reputation to another deceive by confirming what he has already established.

Therefore, as the Writers of the holy Scriptures, though they a claim a Divine Authority, yet write in perfect connexion and Har mony, mutually confirming the doctrine and testimony of each other, an concurring to establish the very same religious truths and principles, it a strong proof that they all derive their instructions from the same foun tain, the wisdom of God, and were indeed under the direction an illumination of his Spirit.

We may take another argument from ourselves, as we make professio of faith in *Jesus Christ*. For our profession of Christianity, who dwe in the uttermost parts of the earth, is a proof that the Gospel sprea itself over all the *Roman* empire; for, from *Jerusalem*, it came to us b a gradual progress, and, advancing from one country to another, arrive at length in these islands of *Great-Britain* and *Ireland*. Nobody ca doubt or deny that the Christian faith is, and for many ages past ha been, embraced in all those numerous and distant lands which onc composed the *Roman* empire, and even in countries far beyond th utmost bounds thereof. In all these spacious tracts the Christian faith in one form or other, has been professed; and baptism and the Lord's supper, in one form or other, have been administered, in a succession ages, quite up to the times of the Apostles and our Lord.

It is most certain that baptism and the Lord's-supper, those summarie of the whole Gospel, were not instituted in any following age, by an one party of Christians, but have been handed down to us, and to a parties among Christians, from the very mouth and institution of *Jesu Christ*. No fact can be more evident than this. From our Lord there fore, and his Apostles, the Gospel spread over the greatest part of th known world, which before the publication of the Gospel was univer sally involved in idolatry, established by long custom and human law strongly guaranteed by all the power and learning of the world, by a the zeal of the wildest superstition, by all the violence and obstinacy prejudice, by all the blindness of profound ignorance, and all the inco rigible perverseness of corrupt and dissolute manners: a complicatio of causes which would for ever have bid defiance to any philosophy wisdom of the few that can be supposed to attain a better sense in th midst of universal darkness and depravity. But the Gospel gained most complete and extensive victory over all these, demolished every id in the heathen world, and every where erected the trophies of a co quering *Jesus*.

Now this surprising change, which is notorious to all mankind, mu

effected either by human power and policy, or by a divine and super-tural influence. By human power and policy great revolutions have en brought about in all ages and parts of the world; and therefore e do not wonder at the spread of the *Mahometan* or *Turkish* religion, it was propagated by the sword, under the conduct of a mighty arrior and politician, who by ravages, bloodshed, and desolations, nquered many nations and kingdoms, laid the foundation of a potent d spacious empire, and thus by violence opened a way for the reception d extensive profession of his newly-devised religion. But the religion *Jesus* was triumphant, not only without the aid of human power or licy, but even in direct opposition to it.

For the plain fact is this. A poor young man, about 30 years of age, lled *Jesus*, a carpenter's son, of no education or learning, without use or habitation, without the least human interest or influence, be-ns to preach up reformation among the *Jews*, the most suspicious and goted people in the world; declares himself the Son of God; gathers few Disciples, persons in the same low and naked condition with him-lf, fishermen, publicans, and such like, and sends them about preaching hat he called the Gospel of the kingdom of God. He was despised the generality, and greatly opposed and harrassed by the men of wer and learning. However, he shifted for himself as well as he could; t, after he had preached three or four years, they caught him and cru-fied him as an infamous malefactor.

This direful event, which would have totally ruined an impostor, he ainly foresaw and foretold; but, not in the least discouraged by the ospect, he ordered his Disciples to go and preach his Gospel over all e world, promising that after his death he would assist them with power om heaven, in virtue of which they should certainly succeed. They lieved him, they set out, they preached up their crucified Master as e Lord and Saviour of all mankind; and, which is very strange, nder the conduct and influence of a master who was dead to this world, d gone to the other state, they prevailed; and in spite of the fury of e multitude, the most inveterate prejudices of the whole world, the al of superstition, the hatred of the *Jews*, the contempt of the *Greeks*, e power of the *Romans*, the pride of *philosophers*, and the policy of *tesmen*, their doctrine, like the sun, almost at once, enlightened the orld, overthrew the whole system of Pagan idolatry and religion, and vanced as far as our own country in the darkest and remotest corner of e earth.

Of this we ourselves, we Christians, are living monuments and proofs: e have received the Gospel, we own it a glorious and shining light; e have renounced the idolatry and vain conversation of our fathers; we knowledge and worship the living and true God; we confess and adore e crucified Jesus, our king and head, and hope for eternal life through m. Now, there is no possible way of accounting for this, but by lowing that *Jesus* really was the Son of God, that he really rose again om the dead, and ascended up into heaven, and that he actually from ence sent his Disciples the aids and powers which he had promised, and nich were so far above all that is human, that they carried their own

evidence along with them, and rendered their doctrine so surprising successful.

And as *Jesus* did not send his Disciples to preach to all the world, t after his death, and as he then, after his death, did actually furnish the with all miraculous powers to render their doctrine effectual, this the most conceiving proof that his doctrine was divine, and that he him self was actually gone to heaven, and lived there in the highest intere and favour with God. For that an impostor, a deceiver, hateful to the Go of truth, should, after his death, be able to animate, instruct, autho rize, and empower a company of men, otherwise destitute of all assist ance, and labouring under all possible difficulties, to throw down all th religions of the world, and to erect a new one in their stead, is utterl impossible. It is therefore certain, beyond all doubt, that *Jesus Chris* was sent from heaven to reveal the Gospel to the world. And as we ar very sure that we have in our hands the writings of his Apostles, w may be as sure, that they contain a revelation from heaven, or that doc trine which *Christ* received from God and delivered to his Disciples And if so, then the writings of the Old Testament are also the word o God, for *Christ* and his Apostles declare them to be such. Therefore all Scripture is given by inspiration of God.

The same thing may be proved by the long train of miraculous operations which could be effected only by a Divine power, and which were wrought in confirmation of the mission of Prophets and Apostles; as also from the spirit of prophesy predicting future events at a great distance of time, which no human wisdom or sagacity could possibly foresee, and yet were actually and punctually fulfilled in correspondence to the prediction. But as a minute detail of particulars would perhaps be somewhat tedious, I shall single out one instance of the Divine miraculous power, and the truth of the prophetic spirit; which instance has been in all ages a standing proof of revelation, and which still exists, and is before the eyes of the present generation, in almost all countries of the world; I mean, the present state and being of the *Jews*. For this people, as they were originally chosen to be the repository or storehouse of Divine knowledge, by the revelation which was given to them, so they were also intended to be visible proofs of the truth of it in all ages and parts of the world. Our Lord, contrary to all human probability, while he was on the earth, foretold the destruction of the Jewish temple and polity, and their dispersion among all nations, which was exactly accomplished in about 40 years after. And in this dispersed state they have now continued about 1700 years, in great numbers, and in great ignominy and contempt, and yet quite distinct and separate from all the people among whom they lived.

This appears to me a standing miracle; nor can we attribute it to any other cause but the will and extraordinary interposition of heaven, when it is considered, that of all the famous nations of the world who might have been distinguished from others with great advantage, and the most illustrious marks of honour and renown, as the ancient *Egyptians*, *Assyrians*, *Persians*, *Macedonians*, *Romans*, who all in their turns held the empire of the world, and were, with great ambition, the lords of

mankind;

nkind; yet theſe, even in their own countries, are diſſolved into the k of mankind, nor is there a perſon upon earth can boaſt he is de-nded from thoſe renowned and imperial anceſtors.

Whereas a ſmall nation, generally deſpiſed and hated, and which, ugh now upon pretty good terms with us, both *Pagans* and pretended *iſtians* have for many ages treated with the utmoſt inſult, indig-, outrage and cruelty, and which therefore, one would imagine, ry ſoul that belonged to it ſhould have gladly diſowned, and have n willing to have loſt the odious name by mixing with any other on; yet, I ſay, this hated people, harraſſed and butchered more or by all mankind, baniſhed and bandied from one country to another, who ſcarce had any peace till trade and traffic brought the world to etter temper, and more favourable treatment of them—I ſay, this ed people have, under all temptations to the contrary, and againſt ordinary courſe of things, continued in a body *diſtinct* and *ſeparate* n all mankind, even in a ſtate of diſperſion, for about 1700 years.

This demonſtrates, that the wiſdom which formed them into a pecu-people, that they have almoſt ever ſince the deluge, for about 3600 rs, remained in a diſtinct and ſeparate ſtate, and are ſtill likely to do is not human, but Divine; for no human wiſdom or power could n, or however could execute, ſuch a vaſt, extenſive deſign. It muſt he wiſdom and power of that God alone, who is the ſame in every , and who in every age has exerciſed a peculiar providence over his uliar people, the deſcendents of *Abraham* his ſervant. And thus the ſent ſtate and being of the *Jews* is every where a public and ſtanding lence of the truth of revelation, in two reſpects.

. With reſpect to their long diſperſion, or captivity, as they call and the various calamities they were to ſuffer therein.

This is foretold in ſeveral places, particularly, *Deut.* xxviii. 63, 64, *The Lord will rejoice over you to deſtroy you, and bring you to nought,* o their ſingular privileges and enjoyments; *and ye ſhall be plucked off n the land, whither ye go to poſſeſs it. And the Lord ſhall ſcatter thee ng all people, from one end of the earth even unto the other——and among e nations thou ſhalt find no eaſe, neither ſhall the ſole of thy foot have reſt; the Lord ſhall give thee there a trembling heart, and failing eyes, and ow of mind.* Ezek. xxxvi. 19. *I ſcattered them among the heathen, and were diſperſed among the countries. I will ſcatter thee among the heathen, diſperſe thee among the countries.* And our Lord predicts, *Luke* xxi. *And they*, the Jews, *ſhall fall by the edge of the ſword, and ſhall be away captive into all nations, and Jeruſalem ſhall be trodden down of the tiles.*

. With reſpect to their being preſerved in their diſperſion, and pre-ed as a diſtinct and ſeparate body, this alſo was plainly predicted. t. xxvi. 44. *Yet for all that, when they be in the land of their enemies, ill not caſt them away, neither will I abhor them, to deſtroy them utterly, to break my covenant with them.* Jer. xxx. 10, 11. *Fear not, O my ſer-t, Jacob; neither be diſmayed, O Iſrael; for lo, I will ſave thee from afar, thy ſeed from the land of their captivity; for though I make a full end of nations, whither I have ſcattered thee, yet will I not make a full end of*

thee. Jer. xxxi. 10. *Hear the word of the Lord, O ye nations, and declare it in the isles afar off; and say, he that scattered Israel will gather him, and keep him, as a shepherd doth his flock.* Ver. 35, 36, 37. *Thus saith the Lord who gives the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night; who divides the sea when the waves thereof roar the Lord of Hosts is his name. If those ordinances depart from before me saith the Lord, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me for ever. Thus saith the Lord, If heaven above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel, for all that they have done, saith the Lord.* Rom. xi. 25, 26. *Blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in and so all Israel shall be saved; as it is written, there shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob.*

These, and many more passages, too numerous to be now quoted, plainly shew that it was the design of Divine Providence to preserve the Jewish nation, in their dispersion, and to preserve them a distinct and separate people in order to their future restoration. And we, and many other nations, at this day, see these predictions made good in the present state of the *Jews*, who have been so long, and still are miraculously preserved separate from all other people. Now this is, in my opinion, a standing miracle, a wonderful work of Divine Providence, and a strong a proof of revelation, as if we were to see the dead, every year rise out of their graves in confirmation of it. For we have still among us, after so long a time, and so many various revolutions in human affairs, the peculiar people whom God, above three thousand years ago, separated unto himself; the very people who are the principal subject of revelation, and who are said there to be the principal objects of his providence; and we see them at this day to be so in a very surprising manner.

Therefore in their present state we may plainly read the ancient promise made to *Abraham*, the head and root of the nation, the many wonderful works wrought for them from first to last, and the truth of prophetic predictions; in the present state of the *Jews* we may read the truth of the Gospel, for the rejection of which God rejected them, and scattered them over the face of the earth. In short, we are sure there was such a people as the *Jews*, to whom God delivered the revelation of his will in ancient times; for this very people exist among us at this day, and preserve among them that very revelation, with the most sacred and religious care. And we are sure the numerous predictions of Scripture, both in the Old and New Testament, relating to their future state are true, for we see them made good in the present state of the *Jews*; and therefore we may be as sure that the holy Scriptures are given by inspiration of God; for only the Spirit of God could foretel such events; and the same Spirit which foretold these events, spake in the Prophets and Apostles, and inspired them with all that Divine wisdom and knowledge which we find in all their writings.

I might add the long apostacy, and general corruption of the professors of Christianity, so plainly foretold, and under such express and particular characters, in the Apostolic writings. This, all the world may see, has been abundantly fulfilled in the church of ROME. Now, only

he Spirit of God could foreſee ſuch a diſtant and deplorable ſtate of hings, which no human probability could have conjectured would have iſen out of the pure and heavenly doctrine of Chriſt. But the Spirit vhich predicted this event, is the very ſame which was poured out upon he Apoſtles, and enlightened their minds with the knowledge of the Goſpel; therefore the Apoſtles, who wrote the New Teſtament, had he Spirit of God, and were enlightened by it.

By theſe arguments I am pointing out to you the only fountain of life and happineſs, a mine infinitely more valuable than of gold and precious tones, a plentiful magazine of heavenly and everlaſting wealth, an nexhauſtible fund of ſolid comfort and peace, the holy Scriptures, the word of the ever-bleſſed God; a treaſure of immenſe value, which we have in our poſſeſſion, if we are wiſe to make a right improvement of it.

There remains yet another argument to prove the Divine Authority and Original of Scripture, taken from the internal excellency of it. This I ſhall conſider in the following chapter.

CHAP. XLII.

The internal Worth and Excellency of SCRIPTURES *conſidered, as containing the beſt Principles of Knowledge, Holineſs, and Comfort.*

THE arguments which I have already advanced, are taken from the external evidence that the Scriptures are the word of God. Proceed we now to conſider their internal Worth and Excellency, which more fully and directly demonſtrates their Divine original, and falls in with the ſecond part of my deſign, which was to conſider the uſe and importance of the holy Scriptures.

Conſidering the Scriptures as a gift and bleſſing from God, the Father of lights and the Fountain of all good, for our improvement in knowledge and holineſs, in order to our being advanced to eternal glory and happineſs, we may in general conclude, that the Scriptures are in worth and uſefulneſs fully proportionable to the wiſdom and goodneſs of the Donor, and to the noble and beneficent end for which they are intended. They are a glorious diſplay of heavenly light, irradiating the darkneſs of the world, which otherwiſe would have been involved in the blackeſt night of ignorance. Let it be obſerved, to the honour of the Bible, that it is the book which, under the Divine Providence, has preſerved in the world the knowledge of the one true God, which otherwiſe muſt have been loſt and extinguiſhed. For when God in his infinite wiſdom was pleaſed to call *Abraham*, and ſeparate his family to the purpoſes of revelation, idolatry, even in thoſe early days, not long after

the flood, was so far spread, that even *Abraham*'s family were idolaters and served other gods; and so far did the corruption of religion prevail, that all nations, losing the true idea of one God and Father of all fell into the foulest idolatry, the grossest superstition, and all the abominable vices in connexion with them, except the nation of the *Jews* who enjoyed the word and revelation of God. And it was the word and revelation of God, at the time our Saviour came into the world, which enlightened the *Gentiles*, and so generally reduced them to the worship and obedience of the everlasting *Jehovah*, the Creator of the ends of the earth.

What knowledge of the living God, what detestation of idol-worship, what belief of a future state of rewards and punishment, MAHOMET has propagated in the world, he received partly from *Jews*, and partly from *Christians*, who had learnt those things from revelation though, as he could not read himself, with much confusion, and a large mixture of fiction and falsehood. Is any part of the Christian world sunk into superstition and idolatry? It is because they have shut up the Scriptures, forbidden the free use of them, and commanded the people under pain of damnation to follow other guides. Is any part of the Christian world reformed from the gross errors and monstrous corruptions of Popery? It is because they have asserted the authority of the Scriptures, resumed the use of them, and opened them again to free and common perusal. Nay further—Is the Deist, or the man who in a Christian land denies or disparages revelation, acquainted with the first cause, the Fountain of all being, power, life, and happiness, the universal Sovereign? Has he a clear idea of the system of duties which we owe to our Maker, and to one another; or any expectation of a future state of felicity? It is because he has lighted his twinkling candle at this resplendent Sun, which he unnaturally, ungratefully, and weakly endeavours to extinguish. I say *weakly*, because this Sun, which God, ever since the creation of his church and kingdom, has caused to shine in the moral world, shall by his Providence be preserved, and shine with a growing lustre, so long as the sun in the firmament shall endure.

Under God, it must be owned the instrumental cause of all the true religion and piety that is to be found in the world, which, for aught we can see, notwithstanding all the philosophy and wisdom of man, would have been totally lost among all the nations; and it shall be established more and more, it shall shine forth more and more, it shall be honoured more and more, in the truth of its doctrines, in the wisdom of its precepts and instructions, in the accomplishment of its predictions and promises, and in the appearing of our Lord at the last day, to receive into his joy all that know God, and obey his Gospel. It shall be established, it shall shine, it shall be honoured, when those who now despise and disparage it, shall be confounded and perish for ever.

Thus much may be truly said of the usefulness of Scripture in general; which gives it infinitely the preference to all books of mere human composure, that it has been the means of preserving in the world the grand principles of religion, the knowledge of the being and perfections

of

f God, and of that true ſpiritual worſhip which alone pleaſes him, nd ennobles, purifies, and comforts our ſouls. And juſt in proportion s the Bible is received, eſteemed, and diligently ſtudied, true religion as prevailed, and will always prevail and flouriſh. On the other hand, n proportion as the Scriptures are unknown, neglected, abuſed, and erverted, ignorance, idolatry, irreligion, error, ſuperſtition, and vickedneſs, have and will ſpread their gloom, and more or leſs infect ations and particular perſons.

The Scriptures contain principles which muſt be allowed to be of a uperior and moſt excellent kind; the beſt principles of knowledge, olineſs, and comfort.

In the Scriptures we find the beſt principles of knowledge. There he mind expatiates in a boundleſs field of heavenly light, and clearly iews the proſpects of truth, where the eye of mere nature could never ave penetrated. There you ſee the being of God aſſerted, his nature nd perfections, his glorious Majeſty and univerſal Sovereignty, deſcribed vith the juſteſt propriety of ſentiment, and magnificence of language. There you read—— "That the everlaſting God, the Lord, the Poſ- 'ſeſſor of all being, of all wiſdom and power, made the earth and 'created man upon it; that he ſtretched out the heavens, and com- 'manded all their hoſts. He meaſured the waters in the hollow of his 'hand, and meted out the heavens with a ſpan, and comprehended the 'duſt of the earth in a meaſure, and weighed the mountains in ſcales, 'and the hills in a balance. He toucheth the mountains, and they 'ſmoke; he looks upon the earth, and it trembleth. Behold, the nations 'are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the ſmall duſt of the 'earth. Behold, he takes up the iſles as a very little thing. All na- 'tions are before him as nothing, and they are counted to him as leſs 'than nothing and vanity.

"The whole univerſe reſts wholly upon his arm, and is entirely ſubject 'to the diſpoſals of his will. Lift up your eyes on high, and behold, 'who has created theſe things, that brings out their hoſt by number? 'He calls them all by name; by the greatneſs of his might, for that 'he is ſtrong in power, not one of them fails; in underſtanding he 'is infinite; he is mighty in wiſdom, wonderful in counſel, and ex- 'cellent in working. He fills heaven and earth; nor can any hide 'himſelf in ſecret places from his all-penetrating eye. The earth is 'full of his glory and riches; and his providence is perpetually exerciſed 'about all and every one of his creatures. All power belongs to him; 'he can help and caſt down, he can ſave and deſtroy; and nothing is 'too hard for the Lord. God is love; the Lord is good, and doth good; 'he is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works; he 'is daily loading us with benefits. The righteous he will bleſs, to 'them he will give grace and glory; and even to the wicked the Lord 'is plenteous and rich in mercy. He is a God of truth, and without 'iniquity; juſt and right is he. He is glorious in holineſs, and of purer 'eyes than to behold evil; neither can he look on iniquity. And this 'God, ſo great, ſo glorious, is our God, our Maker, Owner, and 'Ruler, our Father, Shepherd, and Friend."

This is the doctrine of Scripture; and a ſentence or two in this holy

book will give you much clearer conceptions of God than all the volumes of philoſophy, wrote by ſtrangers to revelation. There you are taught the various diſpenſations of the Divine wiſdom and goodneſs, from the beginning of the world to this day, and even to the end of time. There you ſee the excellent ſchemes which he has formed for the inſtruction, reformation, and happineſs of the children of men; and we read with pleaſure the numerous inſtances of his favour to the righteous, and with dread the terrors of his vengeance upon the wicked. There we find a twofold covenant; of works, which threatens death to every tranſgreſſion; of grace, which grants the benefit of repentance and pardon, and promiſes all needful ſupplies of ſtrength to the ſincere and upright. There we learn how he erected a kingdom among the nations, or a peculiar congregation, to prevent the univerſal corruption of the world, and, like a beacon upon a hill, to diffuſe the light of Divine knowledge in the darkneſs of the earth. At length we ſee the Meſſiah, the Son of God, the Saviour of the world, appear, to take away ſin, to bring in everlaſting righteouſneſs, or ſalvation, to illuſtrate the grace of God, and give the plaineſt explications of his will and our duty; to ſhew the future world in the cleareſt and moſt awful view, and to appoint the moſt powerful means to attract our hearts to God, and to guide our feet into the ways of peace.

In his Goſpel we ſee the dead, ſmall and great, reſtored to life, and appearing before his judgment-ſeat, to receive a ſentence according to what they have done in the body. There he has opened the glories of heaven to our ſight, and ſhewn to our faith the far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, the aſſured conſequence of patient continuance in well-doing; he has alſo uncovered the bottomleſs pit, the blackneſs of darkneſs for ever, which will be the terrible portion of all impenitent workers of iniquity. In the Scriptures the ſtate of the church to the end of the world is deſcribed, and we ſee the preſent ſtate of things correſpondent to prophetic deſcriptions.

I ſhould exceed my bounds, only to mention the ſeveral heads of inſtruction and knowledge with which the word of God is crowned. I ſhall mention but one more, and that is, the deſign of our preſent being in this world, which is there repreſented, agreeably to the appearances of things, and the wiſdom and goodneſs of God, to be not for enjoyment, but for trial; not to gain temporal pleaſures or poſſeſſions, but to diſcipline our ſouls, and to prepare them for immortal honour and glory. In particular, the many afflictions incident to our frailty, are ſet in a true and encouraging light, as the diſcipline and correction of our heavenly Father; not for our deſtruction, but for our improvement in holineſs, to purify our ſpirits from ſenſuality, to draw our regards to things heavenly and eternal, to exerciſe our faith, hope, patience, and every virtue, which is our real excellency and beſt qualification for everlaſting happineſs. This is a brief and very imperfect ſpecimen of Scripture doctrine; which, even in this curſory view, aſſiſted a little with ſober reflection, muſt, to an impartial judgment, moderately acquainted with what the wiſeſt of Pagans have taught, appear infinitely ſuperior to the darkneſs and uncertainty of mere human knowledge and wiſdom.

In the Scriptures you will find the beſt principles of *holineſs*, or of that ſtate

te of mind whereby we are habitually devoted to God and truth. For ere we are ſhewn the dignity and worth of our being, vaſtly beyond y thing we could have hammered out of our own reflections. There e read that we are made in the image of God, inſpired with under- nding, raiſed vaſtly in our faculties above the beaſts or the fowls, and ade for ends proportionably grand and noble; not for the mean pur- ſes of time and ſenſe, but for God, for his honour and favour, to ew forth his praiſe, and for ever enjoy his goodneſs. And every ligation reſulting from this ſuperiority of nature, and the higheſt and oſt excellent purpoſes of our being, is with the greateſt propriety and rce urged upon us. In every page of the holy Scriptures the love of od ſmiles upon us with an attractive and endearing aſpect, to draw our fections to him, and to give a conſtancy and ſteadineſs to our virtue in e midſt of ſo many and ſo ſtrong temptations, when we know that only ch an adherence to truth and righteouſneſs will finally and for ever give s an intereſt in our heavenly Father's bleſſing.

In the Scriptures we have the Divine diſpleaſure againſt all the ungod- neſs and unrighteouſneſs of men ſet upon its true foundation, the dious and pernicious nature of ſin; which is in itſelf falſe and miſ- hievous, the only proper and radical evil in the univerſe, and which lone can deprive us of happineſs, and ſubject us to miſery. In the ord of God, his favour to men of piety and virtue is alſo ſet upon its roper foundation, the amiable and excellent nature of true holineſs; hich in itſelf is true and ſalutary, the only proper and radical good, he glory of our nature, and which alone can render us fit to dwell for ver with God.——There we are kindly encouraged by the Divine grace o think of our ways, and by true repentance to turn from whatever is inful to the obedience of God.——There we are directed frequently to crutinize our hearts, to baniſh thence every corrupt principle, and to eep the ſpring of action within us pure from every diſorderly thought nd inclination; to guard our ſpirits with a watchful eye from every mpure motion and ſuggeſtion, to be vigilant againſt every attack of emptation, that we may keep ourſelves undefiled in the good ways of God.——There we are inſtructed in the moſt perfect and reaſonable ſo- briety, temperance, and ſelf-denial, and warned of the danger of every enſual ſnare and allurement.——There this periſhing body, with what- ever can delight and adorn it; there this preſent world, with whatever n it can engage our affections and eſteem; are fully expoſed to the judg- ment and cenſures of reaſon, and manifeſtly ſhewn to be emptineſs and vanity, infinitely below the excellence and worth of immortal ſpirits, and therefore infinitely unfit to be purſued at the expence of our preſent ntegrity, or future felicity.

In the ſacred writings we find a rich magazine of all proper means for the ſanctification of our ſouls, and our moſt ſucceſsful advances in the life of God.——There we ſee that the Divine Power and Spirit is ready with its mighty aids to aſſiſt, enlighten, and ſtrengthen our ſpi- rits, in proportion to our ſincere deſires and endeavours in godlineſs; and there we are directed every day, and at all times, to ſeek unto God, by fervent and believing prayer, for his guidance and protection, and are aſſured we never ſhall ſeek his face in vain.——There, in the holy Scriptures,

Scriptures, we are taught the ordinances of religion, both public an private, in the conſcientious uſe of which we ſhall grow up into Chri Jeſus; particularly, we are commanded to ſet apart a competent portio of our time, every day, and to keep the ſabbath holy every week; tha by ſerious meditation upon God's word, and by pouring out our heart before him in prayer and thankſgiving, we may renew our ſpiritua ſtrength, be more and more confirmed in the habits of holineſs, an find ourſelves ſtill advancing nearer to heavenly perfection. This ſketc of the principles of holineſs, to be derived from the Scriptures, clearl proves their Divine original and excellence, as it ſets them vaſtly abov any thing mere human wiſdom can diſcover or deviſe.

In the Scriptures we alſo find the beſt principles of comfort and re freſhment to the ſoul. How needful are ſuch principles in a ſcene o affliction, ſin, and weakneſs! In general, under how many amiable cha racters, under how many ſweet encouragements, are we invited to truſt in the Almighty and Eternal; to look unto him, and make his name, his goodneſs, and power, our refuge in every want, danger, difficulty, and conflict! being aſſured that he cares for us, while we hope in him, and that he will never leave us nor forſake us; that, however he may permit our ſufferings and griefs, he never can forget us, and will make all things, how bitter ſoever, work together for our good. Heaven is at all times open to our complaints and ſupplications, and the throne of God, which is a throne of grace, is eaſy of acceſs to the breathings and deſires of our hearts.

Are we loaded with a ſenſe of guilt? See the blood of Jeſus the ſecurity and ſeal of our pardon. Are we humbled under a ſenſe of our own unworthineſs? Hear the voice of Divine grace freely conferring a dignity upon us far ſuperior to all the honours of this world. Look into the Scriptures; view the unſearchable riches of *Chriſt*; behold the love of our God and Redeemer; of his own gracious will, and mere good pleaſure, he has begotten us, he is become our Father, he has juſtified us, he has beſtowed upon us the honours of his children, he has made us welcome to all the bleſſings of his covenant, and to all the glories of his kingdom. Fearful and dejected Soul, look into the Goſpel, and ſee thy God ſhining in all the beams of free, rich, and heavenly grace. Be of good comfort; thy ſins are forgiven, thy intereſt in the covenant is ſure; the God and Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, is thy God and Father, and thou art welcome to all the treaſures of his mercy and goodneſs. Only rejoice in this grace, and live agreeably to it in all faith, purity and holineſs, love and goodneſs.

Are you afraid your own weakneſs and ſurrounding temptations ſhould draw your regards from God, pervert your minds, and cauſe you to fall ſhort of ſalvation? Fear not, thou worm *Jacob*, for I am with thee; be not diſmayed, for I am thy God; *I will ſtrengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right-hand of my righteouſneſs*, or ſalvation. Only cleave unto God, by faith in Chriſt, with purpoſe of heart, and he who has begun a good work will certainly perfect it unto the day of Chriſt. You ſhall be more than conquerors through him that has loved us. Doth the world frown, and pour its ſorrows into your breaſts? Look to the heavenly world, the glory that ſhall be

revealed

evealed in the ſaints. That is your home and country, that is your ortion and inheritance; and if you regard it as ſuch, you will rejoice n the hope of the glory of God, and be raiſed far above the cares and ears of this low and tranſitory ſtate. Such ſtrong conſolations the holy criptures ſupply, and therefore their author is undoubtedly the God of ll conſolation; for no wiſdom of man could ever poſſibly have opened o us ſuch a fountain of joy and refreſhment. And thus we ſee the Scripures contain, beyond all diſpute, the beſt principles of knowledge, of oline ſs, and comfort.

It is no leſs evident that they deliver the beſt precepts for directing all ur actions. Such precepts are reducible to three heads, our duty to God, to our neighbour, and to ourſelves. God we are taught to worhip with a ſincere admiration of his glory and perfections, with profound reverence of his greatneſs, with humble adoration of his Sovereignty, with the higheſt love and eſteem for his excellency and amiableneſs, with joy and gratitude for his goodneſs, and with a heart truly devoted to his honour, and determined for his obedience. To our neighbour we are directed to perform not only juſtice, truth, and equity, but alſo unfeigned charity, the moſt extenſive kindneſs and benevolence. To ourſelves we owe ſelf-preſervation and ſelf-government; and the Scriptures admoniſh us to take the wiſeſt care of our being, by cultivating and guarding our minds, and by mortifying all inordinate affections and paſſions. In ſhort, all that our reaſon can find in the law or religion of nature, is, without the leaſt omiſſion, tranſcribed into revelation; and moreover, the wiſdom of God has not only perfected and ſupplied our deficiencies, but has diſcovered to us the riches of goodneſs, knowledge, and power, infinitely beyond what our natural faculties could ever have attained.

Thus we are furniſhed both with the moſt perfect rules of virtue and godlineſs, and alſo with the moſt powerful motives to the obſervance of them; and thus the Scriptures are a ſtorehouſe of the moſt ſacred and uſeful knowledge, adapted to the improvement of our minds in whatever is good or excellent, beyond all competition and objection. But as thoſe only can object againſt them, who never read them, or never with ſerious minds, if you would know what the Scriptures are, if you would know whether they are of God, read them, ſtudy them, meditate upon them, and you cannot fail of being convinced of their excellency and Divine original.

Such being the intrinſic excellency of the Scriptures, it is no wonder t entered into our Lord's thoughts, and was the object of his care in his aſt moments, even amidſt the pains and agonies of death. Its being he ſubject of his thoughts at a time when his thoughts turned upon nothing but what was infinitely momentous, his being concerned upon he croſs, that no point of Scripture ſhould want its full evidence, or eſtabliſhment, is a demonſtration of the high worth and excellency of Scripture. Under all his preceding ſufferings, which muſt be exceeding bitter, he never dropt the leaſt expreſſion of the ſorrow and anguiſh he felt, but endured it with the ſilence of the moſt perfect meekneſs and patience. We muſt therefore conclude, he would not have opened his mouth to ſignify his grievous diſtreſs, when on the croſs, *Why haſt thou forſaken*

forſaken me? had it not been for the ſake of expreſſing his truſt in God nor would he have mentioned his thirſt, but out of regard to divine re velation, and its accompliſhment.

Our Lord has, all along, from firſt to laſt, ſhewn the higheſt reſpec to the word of God. With this ſword he did combat and conquer Sa tan, when tempted by him in the wilderneſs. He always in the courſ of his miniſtry appeals to it as the ſtandard of religious truth, revealin the will of God, and explaining his diſpenſations. He declares he cam not to deſtroy ſo much as one tittle of the Law or the Prophets, but t complete, vindicate, and illuſtrate them; aſſuring us that as their origina is Divine, their honours ſhall be perpetual; and that, *till heaven and eart paſs away*, and the whole frame of nature be diſſolved, *not one jot ſha paſs*, or periſh, *from the Law*, or from Revelation, *till all be fulfilled* John v. 39. He directs the *Jews* to ſearch the Scriptures, as they rightly apprehended the doctrine of eternal life was contained in them, and as they teſtified of him.

As his ſufferings drew nearer, he frequently takes notice of the fulfilment of the Scriptures in the ſeveral ſteps and events which led to them. *Matt.* xxvi. 31, 54. *John* xiii. 18. xv. 25. That the Scriptures might be fulfilled in his ſufferings and death, he would not allow his Diſciples to reſcue him out of the hands of thoſe who came to ſeize him. *Matt.* xxvi. 53, 54. Had he prayed to the Father, he would have given him more than twelve legions of angels; *but how then*, ſays he, *ſhall the Scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it muſt be?* And when upon the croſs, he is not diverted from the ſame important ſubject, though in the midſt of the moſt exquiſite torments, and labouring under a violent drought. Regard to the Scriptures prevails in his mind, more than the ſenſe of the greateſt pain and anguiſh; and not to relieve his thirſt, *but that the Scriptures might be fulfilled*, he cried out, *I thirſt.*

Thus our crucified Lord has ſet the ſeal of his blood to the Divine authority, excellency, and certainty of the holy Scriptures. He came into the world, he laid down his life to accompliſh what was fore-ordained, and foretold in the Scriptures. Now this evidently implies, that our Lord knew, and was perſuaded, the Scriptures are of Divine original, are the word, and declare to us the mind and will of God; conſequently, that they contain diſcoveries and inſtructions of the higheſt and moſt excellent nature; and that all things they predict muſt, and moſt certainly will, be accompliſhed.

It ſeems but an inconſiderable circumſtance, that the Scriptures intimate they would give the *Meſſiah* in his thirſt vinegar to drink. This ſeems to be a fact of no great moment, nor do we know that it ſtood in connexion with any thing of conſequence, and yet our Lord would not overlook it. He took care it ſhould be punctually fulfilled. How much more then may we perſuade ourſelves, that all the great promiſes, and all the predictions relating to matters of vaſt importance, ſhall be accompliſhed? The apparent inſignificancy of vinegar being offered to *Chriſt* on the croſs, adds great force to this argument. If a point, ſeemingly ſo minute, was carefully attended to, and punctually diſcharged, when the Redeemer was in extremity of pain and torture, how much more, now that he is entered into his joy, now that he is poſſeſſed of the

e higheſt felicity and glory, now that he is inveſted with the moſt ex-nſive power and dominion, how much more will he make good all at God has declared by the ancient Prophets in the Old Teſtament, nd all that he himſelf hath foretold and promiſed in the New, relating things of infinite moment! Exceeding great and precious promiſes e given us of the Divine preſence, bleſſing, and protection, through is world, which every upright mind may be aſſured will be fully made ood.

How many magnificent predictions has our Lord, and his Apoſtles, elivered concerning the world that is to come——*That he will raiſe us p again at the laſt day.* And we ſhall certainly be raiſed out of our raves, and reſtored to a life quite different from the preſent——*That e will come in great power and glory to judge the world.* And moſt aſſu-edly he will ſo come, and we ſhall every one of us ſtand before his tri-unal to give an account of ourſelves——To his faithful ſervants *he has romiſed eternal life:* and to all ſuch, without fail, he will give eternal ife.——It is frequently foretold, that *everlaſting deſtruction from the pre-ence of the Lord* will be the dreadful lot of the impenitently wicked, and oubtleſs everlaſting deſtruction will be the dreadful lot of ſuch.—Moſt learly he has made known his everlaſting kingdom of glory, where his incere followers ſhall partake of his glory and felicity; and we may irmly believe and hope, this will be our happy condition, if we make it our preſent care to be his ſincere followers. Thus has our benevolent Saviour afforded us, in his laſt moments, a moſt ſolid ground of hope owards God, and directed us abſolutely to depend upon all that the Scriptures reveal concerning our ſalvation.

CHAP. XLIII.

Chriſtians ought to be thankful for the SCRIPTURES, *and maintain a high Eſteem for them.*

HAVING, ſo far as ſeems neceſſary, conſidered the uſe and importance of the holy Scriptures, I would now point out the propereſt improvement of this intereſting ſubject.

We may evidently ſee our obligation to be thankful for the Scriptures; they are the gift of God, and a great help to our underſtanding, and rational powers, in the beſt attainments. And as our natural light and faculties certainly demand our gratitude and thanks, that God has *made us wiſer than the fowls of heaven, and taught us more than the beaſts of the earth*; and as our joy and praiſe will be agreeable to our illumination, when in God's heavenly light we ſhall ſee glorious and eternal light; ſo the

the ſuperior inſtructions and diſcoveries of revelation do challenge our ſincere thanks to our wiſe and benevolent Father, who has employed his ſpirit at ſundry times, and divers manners, to pour knowledge and light into the darkneſs of the nations, which otherwiſe would, in effect, have generally loſt the uſe of intelligence; and that at length he has viſited us with the day-ſpring from on high, a full diſplay of his heavenly grace in the everlaſting Goſpel.

Should we not maintain a juſt, that is to ſay, a very high eſteem of the word of God? If it is true, *that all Scripture is given by inſpiration of God, and is profitable* for the nobleſt ends, *for doctrine, for reproof, correction, inſtruction in righteouſneſs*, then it is true that we cannot ſet too high a value upon it. The things of this world, which are very imperfect and tranſitory, have, alas, too large a ſhare of our hearts; but the holy Scriptures are a treaſury of heavenly and everlaſting riches, and it is but reaſonable we ſhould give them the preference to what we know is infinitely inferior in worth. And it is upon this ground that the wiſeſt and beſt of men have repreſented them as the higheſt object of our delight and eſteem. *Pſalm* xix. 7—10. *The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the ſoul; the teſtimony of the Lord is ſure, making wiſe the ſimple. The ſtatutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart. More to be deſired are they than gold; yea, than much fine gold; ſweeter alſo than honey, and the honey-comb.* Pſalm cxix. 96, 97, 103. *I have ſeen an end of all perfection; but thy commandment is exceeding broad. O, how love I thy law! It is my meditation all the day. How ſweet are thy words unto my taſte; yea, ſweeter than honey to my mouth!* And we may then only call ourſelves happy, when we have attained the ſame ſentiments and taſte of the good word of God. Indeed I cannot ſee that we uſe it as what it is, or anſwer our Chriſtian profeſſion, if we do not treat it with great eſteem and regard. To this purpoſe let us——

Not allow ourſelves to think of it with indifference, or in any reſpect to treat it irreverently. The worth and infinite importance of the thing will not bear a cool and languid thought; and it is too ſacred and divine to admit of any degree of contempt. It is with ſome reckoned a turn of wit to introduce Scripture phraſe into common converſation, and to provoke pleaſantry by quoting the Bible. What is this but burleſquing the word of God, and raiſing a laugh at the expence of the greateſt bleſſing of heaven? Such a profane levity will by degrees leſſen the reverence we owe to Scripture, and deſtroy all ſerious regard to it; which is, in effect, to deſtroy ourſelves; and therefore ſhould not only be carefully avoided, but with abhorrence deteſted.

Guard your minds well againſt Deiſm on the one hand, and Popery on the other. Both theſe agree in depreciating the Scriptures. The Deiſt will perſuade you revelation is unneceſſary, and conſequently that the Scripture is no revelation from God, but a fallacy and cheat, at firſt invented, and afterwards ſupported, by thoſe who find their account in it. He racks his invention to ſtart any difficulty or objection, to prove that the Bible is not ſufficient to the purpoſes of revelation. And here, the Romaniſt joins him. They go indeed different ways; the one, as he pretends, to the mere religion of nature; and the other, in reality, to the authority of the church, and a living infallible guide upon earth. But

both

th ſtart from the ſame point, degrading the holy Scriptures; and I
ır very much, they will meet and unite again in a few generations.
or where Deiſtical principles prevail in a family, the riſing generation
uſt grow up in great ignorance of revelation, and the true worſhip of
od, and ſo will be expoſed to the artifice of the ſeducer, who lies in
it to deceive. For however men may refine in their ſpeculations, and
t a force upon the moſt common and obvious principles in their minds,
t certainly ſuch is the general ſenſe of mankind, when left free and
biaſſed, with regard to religion, that they eaſily admit the belief of ſome
perior inviſible powers, and their intercourſe with this world; and
ing ignorant of the truth, are with little difficulty drawn into error.
This makes me apprehend that the preſent ſpread of Deiſm will, in a
v ages, produce a large increaſe of Popery among us. Not to ſay,
at Popiſh ſeminaries, where they cannot directly promote the cauſe of
e church of ROME, are allowed and inſtructed to do it in this indi-
ſt way. For confuſion and ignorance of any kind is a proper ground
· them to work upon. But this by the bye. My deſign is to guard
u againſt thoſe who would raiſe ſcruples and prejudices in your minds
ainſt revelation. And without deſcending to particulars, you may be
ry ſure of this one thing, that whoever cavil againſt the Scriptures are
angers to them. They object and take upon themſelves to judge in
natter in which they are no ways qualified to be judges; in a matter
hich they neither underſtand, nor, in their preſent way of thinking,
er intend to underſtand. For, whatever airs ſuch may give themſelves,
what ſemblance or ſhow ſoever they make of knowledge and wiſdom,
eſe men have never ſtudied the Scriptures; nor, generally ſpeaking,
ve they learning or capacity to enter into their deep and abſtruſe parts.
d they ever ſoberly and ſeriouſly ſtudied the Scriptures, they muſt of
ceſſity have found ſo many, and ſuch evident marks of a Divine Spirit,
ch glorious diſplays of the wiſdom, power, and truth of God, as would
ve taught them to think more modeſtly of what is doubtful and ob-
re.

When did you ever hear of any name, illuſtrious for learning and wiſ-
m, that ever diſputed the Divine original and authority of Scripture?
d ever a BOYLE, a NEWTON, or a LOCKE, queſtion the Divine ori-
al or truth of Scripture?* No. Theſe men, of the moſt eminent attainments

* The famous SELDEN, one of the moſt eminent philoſophers, and moſt
rned men of his time; who had taken a diligent ſurvey of antiquity, and
at knowledge was conſiderable amongſt *Jews*, *Heathens*, and *Chriſtians*,
l read as much, perhaps, as any man ever read; towards the end of his
's, declared to Arch-Biſhop USHER,

' That notwithſtanding he had been ſo laborious in his enquiries, and
curious in his collections; and had poſſeſſed himſelf of a treaſury of books
and manuſcripts, upon all ancient ſubjects; yet he could *reſt his ſoul on none
ſave the Scriptures.* And above all, that paſſage gave him the moſt ſatisfac-
tion, *Titus* ii. 11—14. as compriſing the nature, end, and reward of true
religion.

' *THE grace of God, that bringeth ſalvation, hath appeared to all men.*

" *TEACHING*

attainments in wisdom and knowledge, held the Scriptures in the high veneration and esteem, as a revelation from God; and by their excelle comments have acknowledged the Divine authority even of the m abstruse and difficult parts. No. The cavillers against Scripture men of an inferior class, who want, and are no ways solicitous to ga the qualifications needful to render them in any degree fit or compete judges. It is enough for such to pick up a small collection of scrupl to ease themselves of the trouble of thought or study, and at the sa time to give a plausible appearance of both. But with men of judgmer such must stand in a very ridiculous light. To a judicious physicia how silly and contemptible must a person be, who, though no wa skilled in the science, should take upon him perpetually to censure, v lify, and condemn a BOERHAVE, or a SYDENHAM, the greatest maste in the art of medicine!

Perhaps you may say—Are there not real difficulties in the Scripture And will not difficulties naturally and unavoidably produce objection I answer—There are difficulties in the Scriptures; and difficulties a

t

" *TEACHING us, that denying ungodliness, and worldly lusts, we should li*
" *soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world.*
" *LOOKING for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearance of the gre*
" *God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ.*
" *Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, a*
" *purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.*"

SIR CHRISTOPHER HATTON, a great statesman, a little before his deat advised his relations to be serious in searching after the will of God in his ho word; for, said he—

" It is deservedly accounted a piece of excellent knowledge to understar
" the laws of the land, and the customs of a man's country; how much mor
" to know the statutes of heaven, and the laws of eternity, those immutab
" and eternal laws of justice and righteousness! to know the will and ple
" sure of the great Monarch and universal King! *I have seen an end of a*
" *perfection, but thy commandment is exceeding broad.* Whatever other knov
" ledge a man may be endowed withal, could he by a vast and imperio
" mind, and a heart as large as the sand upon the sea-shore, command a
" the knowledge of art and nature, of words and things; and yet not kno
" the Author of his being, and the Preserver of his life, his Sovereign an
" his Judge, his surest Refuge in trouble, his best Friend or worst Enem
" the Support of his life and the Hope of his death, his future Happine
" and his Portion for ever; he doth but go down to hell with a great de
" of wisdom."

MR. LOCKE, also justly esteemed one of the greatest masters of reason, an a philosopher of the greatest freedom of thought, at the close of his life, th advised an intimate friend.

" Study the holy Scriptures, especially the New Testament; therein a
" contained the words of eternal life. It hath God for its author, salvatio
" for its end, and truth without any mixture of error for its matter." Pos humous Works, p. 344.

And to the same effect, a wiser still in the same situation, SOLOMON, *fear God, and keep his commandments*, (in order to which, it is necessary tha we read and study them) *is the whole of man. For God shall bring every wor into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evi* Eccles. xii. 13, 14.

e natural ground of objections, but not of deſtroying any truth, other-
ſe well eſtabliſhed. For all ſcience whatever is attended with difficul-
s, and objections may be raiſed againſt the cleareſt and moſt demonſtra-
e truths. The being of God, and his perfections, the creation of the
orld, the conſtitution of nature, the ways of Providence, and any the
ſt and moſt uſeful knowledge we can gain, is attended with difficulties,
d conſequently liable to objections. Let it be well obſerved, thoſe
fficulties ariſe not from the things themſelves, but from the imperfec-
n of our minds. In the things themſelves there are no difficulties,
r any ground for objection; the difficulties are in the narrowneſs of
r underſtandings, which find a great difficulty in comprehending many
ings relating even to the moſt certain and undoubted truths. And,
th regard to the Scriptures, I myſelf have had large experience of
is. Many things which at firſt, and for ſome time, appeared to me
ry obſcure, unaccountable, and inconſiſtent, by patient application,
d a cloſer attention, have ſhone out unclouded into the plaineſt and
eareſt truths. By this I am convinced, that all remaining difficulties
e not ſo in themſelves, but only ſo with reſpect to the imperfection of
y mind. And upon the whole, you may be very ſure, when you hear
y objection advanced againſt the Scriptures, that the objection, in truth
d reality, lies againſt the objector himſelf, as he either cannot, or
ill not, ſee the truth as it ſtands in the word of God.

But you may ſay—Why ſhould God put into his word things to us
fficult and obſcure? I anſwer—To exerciſe our diligence, and to try
ir integrity. I have ſaid ſo much to convince you of the vanity and
lly of Deiſm, and to guard you againſt any bad impreſſions from that
uarter, which may prove of very fatal conſequence. A little of this
aven may do a great deal of harm, as it creates an indifference to Di-
ne knowledge, to the inſtructions and counſels of our heavenly Father;
it takes us off from the ſtudy of the Scriptures, robs us of the beſt
uide of our actions, the moſt powerful motives to all virtue, the ſtrongeſt
onſolations in every day of affliction; and at laſt expoſes to the righ-
ous judgment of God, for the neglect and contempt of the beſt of
eſſings he ever beſtowed upon the world.

We have the ſtrongeſt reaſon to be fully ſatisfied of the ſufficiency of
cripture, as perfectly able to make us wiſe unto ſalvation. The Papiſt
ill own the Scriptures to be the word of God, and a true rule of faith,
ut not a ſufficient rule. The only ſufficient rule of faith he will tell
ou, is the church of ROME, which infallibly underſtands and propounds
hat the Chriſtian world is to believe and do, in order to eternal ſalva-
on; and therefore you ought implicitly to ſubmit your underſtanding
nd conſcience to her direction and deciſions; and doing ſo, you have
o need to conſult the Scriptures, being already provided with a living
fallible guide. But if the Scriptures are a true rule of faith, then are
ey a ſufficient rule to all ſorts and degrees of perſons, for they expreſsly
firm their own ſufficiency in this extenſive ſenſe.

That nothing but Scripture is a ſufficient ground to build our faith and
ractice upon, as Chriſtians, will clearly appear to any conſiderate per-
on. All beſides is uncertainty and confuſion. You have Popes againſt
opes, councils againſt councils, fathers againſt fathers, the church of

one age againſt the church of another age; and tradition paſſing through hands ſo uncertain and inconſiſtent, muſt of neceſſity loſe all force of evidence. Only upon the rock of Scripture can we find any reſt for the ſole of our feet; and there we have a firm foundation, and a ſure infallible guide, which we may with the greateſt certainty and ſteadfaſtneſs oppoſe to the authority of the church of ROME.

Whatever may be pretended to gain that church the credit of a guide, all that, and much more, may be ſaid for the Scriptures. Has the church of ROME been ancient? The Scriptures are more ancient. Is that church a means to keep Chriſtians in unity? So is the Scriptures to preſerve unity of belief in things neceſſary and plainly revealed, and in unity of charity in other matters. Following the Scriptures, we ſhall follow that which muſt be true, if the church of ROME be true, for ſhe owns the truth of Scripture. Whereas, if we follow that church, we follow that which, if the Scriptures be true, may be falſe; nay, which, if the Scriptures be true, muſt be falſe, becauſe the Scriptures teſtify againſt it. We have God's expreſs command to follow the Scriptures, and no intimation or colour of any prohibition; but to believe in the church of ROME we have no command at all, much leſs an expreſs command; nay, on the contrary, we have a general prohibition in theſe words, *Call no man maſter upon earth.*

Following the Scriptures, we ſhall embrace a religion which, being contrary to fleſh and blood, without any aſſiſtance from worldly power, wiſdom, or policy, nay, againſt all the power and policy of the world, prevailed and ſpread itſelf in a ſhort time over a very great part of the world. Whereas it is apparent the church of ROME has got, and ſtill maintains her authority over men's conſciences, by counterfeiting falſe miracles, forging falſe hiſtories, corrupting the monuments of former times, by wars, by perſecutions, by maſſacres, by treaſons, by rebellions; in ſhort, by all manner of carnal unjuſtifiable means, whether violent or fraudulent.

Following the Scriptures, we ſhall believe a religion the firſt preachers and profeſſors whereof could certainly have no worldly ends; could neither project nor promiſe to themſelves by it any of the profits, honours, or pleaſures of this world, but rather the contrary, even all the hardſhips the world could lay upon them. On the other hand, the head of the church of ROME, the pretended vicar of Chriſt, ſucceſſor of the Apoſtles, and guide of faith, it is palpably evident, makes the Popiſh religion the inſtrument of his ambition, to gratify the luſt of dominion, by ſubjecting the conſciences of all mankind to his authority, and all nations to his juriſdiction. Beſides, it is evident to any man who has but half an eye, that moſt of thoſe doctrines which the Romiſh church addeth to the Scriptures, are, one way or other, calculated to promote the honour or temporal profit of the teachers of them.

Following the Scriptures only, we ſhall embrace a religion of perfect ſimplicity and purity; conſiſting, in a manner, wholly in the worſhip of God in ſpirit and truth, and in ſincere obedience to his will. Whereas the Roman church, and doctrine, is loaded with an infinity of weak, childiſh, ridiculous ſuperſtitions and ceremonies, and the moſt groſs and manifeſt idolatry. If we follow the Scriptures, we muſt not promiſe ourſelves

es ſalvation without forſaking effectually, and mortifying all vices, practiſing ſincerely all Chriſtian virtues, which our reaſon tells us is only way in which we can ſecure the favour of God, and our own pineſs. But the church of ROME opens an eaſier and broader way eaven, and, though a man continues all his life long in a courſe of gives him aſſurances he may be let into heaven by a back gate, even n act of attrition, at the hour of death, if it be joined with confeſſion prieſt, or by an act of contrition without it.

uſt and perfect are the precepts of piety and humility, of innocence patience, of goodneſs, temperance, ſobriety, juſtice, meekneſs, forde, and conſtancy, contempt of the world, the love of God, and of nkind; in a word, of all virtues, and againſt all vices, which the iptures oblige us to obſerve and obey, as ever we hope to ſee God in heavenly kingdom; which, if they were generally obeyed, could not make the world generally happy; and the goodneſs of them alone ufficient to make any wiſe and good man believe that the religion ch obliges to them, comes from God, the fountain of all goodneſs. e church of ROME enervates, and in a manner diſſolves and abrogates, ny of the holy precepts of the Goſpel, by teaching men that they not laws for all Chriſtians, but counſels of perfection, and matters ſupererogation, which a man ſhould do well if he obſerves, but ſhall ſin if he doth not obſerve them; that they are for thoſe who aim igh places in heaven; but if a man will be content with an inferior ation there, eſpecially if he be content to taſte of purgatory in the y, he need not incumber his thoughts at preſent with many of the es of the Goſpel. Not to ſay, that the *Romiſh* church manifeſtly foints a ſpirit of uncharitableneſs and cruelty to all mankind, not of her feſſion. Therefore the religion of this church is far from being ſo y or ſo good as the doctrine of Chriſt delivered in the Scriptures, and ſequently cannot come from the ſame fountain of holineſs and good-s.

Following the church of ROME for our guide, we ſhall only follow a nbination of deluded men, who have faſt cloſed their eyes, and are at liberty to open them, or to examine and conſider whether they are he right or no. For that Papiſts have no liberty of judgement is maeſt, becauſe they reckon it a mortal ſin to *doubt of any part of their doce.* Whence it follows, that ſeeing every man muſt reſolve that he will er commit mortal ſin, he muſt never examine the grounds of Poy at all, for fear he ſhould be moved to doubt; or if he do examine, muſt before reſolve that no evidence, not even of Scripture, no moes, be they ever ſo ſtrong, ſhall move him to doubt, leſt he ſhould fall o mortal ſin.

Seeing this is the condition of all who are eſteemed good Catholics, o can deny that they are a ſet of men unwilling and afraid to undernd, that have eyes to ſee and will not, that have not the love of the th, but are given over to ſtrong deluſion? And therefore, in following ſuch a church, and ſuch guides, we ſhall only follow the blind, and h them fall into the ditch. If we follow the Scriptures, we ſhall folv only the truth; we ſhall follow a guide which exhorts us to keep r eyes always open to the truth, to try all things, and to hold faſt only

that which is good; to try every spirit, and to bring every doctrine t the test of God's pure and holy word. And thus we are at liberty to re view the ground upon which we stand, to correct any error, and to im prove our minds in the knowledge and love of the truth.

In these and several other respects, the sufficiency of Scripture t guide us in the way of life and salvation, is evidently seen, and how foolis and unsafe it is to forsake this heavenly guide, and follow the delusion of the church of ROME. But then, the greater the evidence that Scrip ture is a perfect guide to eternal life, the greater must our obligations b to use it faithfully as such.

Let us be much in reading the Scriptures, and think and judge freely By judging freely, I do not mean rashly and at random; we mu judge of the Scriptures with all possible care and caution; but judg freely, without regard to the authority of any person, party, or churc whatsoever. We are made by our gracious Creator for the knowledge o the truth; not to be the dupes of custom or authority, not blindly t follow the dictates, decrees, and constitutions of weak and ambitiou men; but to employ our minds generously in the search and knowledg of the truth. Christianity calls us to the noblest exercise of our under standing; and we lose the benefit of it, if we do not think seriously, an judge freely.

There is no other way of having our minds established, and well sea soned with the principles of our religion. In this way we shall see th glory and excellency of the holy Scriptures; thus we shall feel the powe of God's word upon our hearts; thus our understandings will gradually be enlightened with Divine knowledge, and, to our unspeakable com fort, grow up into Jesus Christ, and gain the happiness of the man who forsaking all impiety, and every false way, delights himself in the law o the Lord, and daily meditates therein. Such a one is under the specia blessing of heaven, and, like a tree planted in a fruitful soil, shall grow and flourish, and rise infinitely higher than all the honours, wealth, an enjoyments of this world; he shall rise to immortality, and there fin all the glorious fruits of a life of piety, and the full accomplishment o the magnificent promises which here on earth he with pleasure perus in the word of God.

This is what I have to offer on this important subject. Whatever th result may be, with regard to others, this one point is sufficiently secure —I have satisfied my conscience by discharging what I esteem an incum bent duty: and I have done it in the faithfulness and integrity of m heart, according to the wisdom God has given me.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX.

hronological Dates for Chapters xxxiv. xxxv. and xxxvi.

CHAP. XXXIV.

PROPHETS *before the* CAPTIVITY.

ars ore rift.		
2	AMAZIAH king of Judah Jeroboam II. king of Israel	Jonah ſent with a meſſage. 2 Kings xiii. 20. xiv. 25.
0	Uzziah king of Judah Jeroboam II.	Joel i. ii. iii.
0	Jeroboam II. king of Iſrael Uzziah king of Judah	Amos i——ix.
0	Jeroboam II. Uzziah	Hoſea i. ii. iii.
	Menahem I.	Hoſea iv.
0	Menahem II.	Jonah i. ii. iii. iv.
0	Uzziah 52. Pekah 1.	Iſaiah vi. ii. iii. iv. v.
3	Jotham 5. Pekah 7.	Micah i. ii.
2	Ahaz 1. Pekah 18.	Iſaiah vii.
	In the ſame year	Iſaiah viii. ix. x.
	In the ſame year	Iſaiah xvii.
0	Ahaz 3. Pekah 20.	Iſaiah i.
	In the ſame year	Iſaiah xxviii.
0	Aphaz 4.	Hoſea v. vi.
0	Hezekiah 2.	Iſaiah xiv. ver. 28, *&c.*
	In the ſame year	Iſaiah xv. xvi.
7	Hezekiah 3. Hoſhea 6.	Hoſea vii—xiv. Micah iii. iv. v. vi. vii.
0	Hezekiah 7.	Nahum i. ii. iii.
7	Hezekiah 13.	Iſaiah xxiii—xxvii.
	Hezekiah 14.	Iſaiah xxxviii. xxxix.
	Hezekiah 14.	Iſaiah xxix. xxx—xxxv.
	In the ſame year	Iſaiah xxii. ver. 1——15.
	In the ſame year	Iſaiah xxi.
3	Hezekiah 15.	Iſaiah xx.
	In the ſame year	Iſaiah xviii. xix.
0	Hezekiah 18.	Iſaiah x. ver. 5, *&c.* xi. xii. xiii. xiv. ver. 28, *&c.*

Years before Christ.		
	In the same year	Isaiah xxxvi. xxxvii.
	In the same year	Isaiah xl—xliii, *&c.*
698	Manasseh 1.	Isaiah xxii. ver. 15.
628	Josiah 13.	Jeremiah i. ii.
623	Josiah 18.	Jeremiah xi. ver. 1—18.
		Jeremiah iii—x. xii—xxi.
		Jeremiah xi. ver. 18, *&c.*
611	Josiah 31.	Habakkuk i. ii. iii. Zephaniah i. ii. iii.
610	Jehoiakim 1.	Jeremiah xxii. ver. 1——24.
	In the same year	Jeremiah xxvi.
606	Jehoiakim 4.	Jeremiah xxv.
	In the same year	Jeremiah xxxv.
	In the same year	Jeremiah xlvi.
	In the same year	Jeremiah xxxvi. ver. 1—9.
	In the same year	Jeremiah xlv.
	In the same year	Daniel i.
605	Jehoiakim 5.	Jeremiah xxxvi. ver. 9, *&c.*
603	Jehoiakim 7.	Daniel ii.
599	Zedekiah 1.	Jeremiah xxii. ver. 24, *&c.*
	In the same year	Jeremiah xxiii.
	In the same year	Jeremiah xiii. ver. 13, *&c.*
	In the same year	Jeremiah xxiv.
	In the same year	Jeremiah xlix. ver. 34, *&c.*
598	Zedekiah 2.	Jeremiah xxix.
	In the same year	Jeremiah xxx. xxxi.
	In the same year	Jeremiah xxvii.
596	Zedekiah 4.	Jeremiah xxviii.
	In the same year	Jeremiah l. li.
595	Zedekiah 5. Jehoiachin's capt. 5.	Ezekiel i—vii.
594	Zedekiah 6. Jehoiachin's capt. 6.	Ezekiel viii——xi.
593	Zedekiah 7. Jehoiachin's capt. 7.	Ezekiel xii——xix.
	In the same year, fifth month	Ezekiel xx——xxiii.
591	Zedekiah 9. Jehoiachin's capt. 9.	Jeremiah xxi. xxxiv. ver. 1——
	In the same year	Jeremiah xlvii.
	In the same year	Jeremiah xlviii. xlix. ver. 1—3
	In the same year	Ezekiel xxiv. xxv.
590	Zedekiah 10. Jehoiachin's capt. 10.	Jeremiah xxxvii. ver. 1——1
	In the same year	Jeremiah xxxiv. ver. 8, *&c.*
	In the same year	Jeremiah xxxvii. ver. 11——16
	In the same year	Jeremiah xxxii. xxiii.
	In the same year	Ezekiel xxix. ver. 1—17. xxx.
	In the same year	Jeremiah xxxvii. ver. 17, *&c.*
	In the same year	Jeremiah xxxviii. ver. 1——14.
	In the same year	Jeremiah xxxix. ver. 15, *&c.*
	In the same year	Jeremiah xxxviii. ver. 14, *&c.*

Years before Chriſt.		
589	Zedekiah 11. Jehoiachin's capt. 11. firſt month	Ezekiel xxxvi. xxxvii. xxxviii.
	In the ſame year, third month	Ezekiel xxxi.
	In the ſame year, fourth month	Jeremiah xxxix. ver. 1——11. lii. ver. 1——30.
	In the ſame year, fifth or ſixth month	Jeremiah xxxix. ver. 11——15. xl. ver. 1——7.
	In the ſame year	Jeremiah xl. ver. 7. xli. xlii. xliii. xliv. ver. 1——8.

CHAP. XXXV.

PROPHETS *after the Deſtruction of the* TEMPLE, *during the* CAPTIVITY.

Years before Chriſt.		
588	JEHOIACHIN's captivity 12. tenth month	Ezekiel xxxiii.
	In the ſame year, twelfth month	Ezekiel xxxii.
	Between the 12 and 25 captivity	Ezekiel xxxiv. xxxvi. xxxvii. xxxviii. xxxix.
	In the ſame year	Obadiah
	In the ſame year	Ezekiel xxxv.
	In this year Nebuchadnezzar ſet up his golden image	Daniel iii.
754	Jehoiachin's captivity 25.	Ezekiel xl. xli. *&c.*
569	Jehoiachin's captivity 30.	Ezekiel xxxi. ver. 17, *&c.*
	In the ſame year	Daniel iv.
562	Jehoiachin's captivity 37.	Jeremiah lii. ver. 31, *&c.*
555	Belſhazzar 1.	Daniel vii.
553	Belſhazzar 3.	Daniel viii.
539	Belſhazzar 17.	Daniel v.
538	Darius the Mede 1.	Daniel vi.
	In the ſame year	Daniel ix.
536	Cyrus 1.	Ezra i. ii.
535	Cyrus 2.	Ezra iii.

CHAP. XXXVI.

Prophets *after the* Captivity, *under the second* Temple.

Years before Christ.		
535	CYRUS 2. In the third year of Cyrus, and third after the captivity	Ezra iv.
		Daniel x. xi. xii.
520	Darius Hystaspes 2. sixth month	Haggai i. ver. 1——12.
	In the same year and month	Haggai i. ver. 12, *&c.* Ezra v.
	In the same year, seventh month	Haggai ii. ver. 1——10.
	In the same year, eighth month	Zechariah i. ver. 1——7.
	In the same year, ninth month	Haggai ii. ver. 10, *&c.*
	In the same year, eleventh month	Zechariah i. ver. 7, *&c.* ii——vi.
516	Darius 3.	Ezra v. ver. 3, *&c.*
518	Darius 4.	Ezra vi. ver. 1——15.
	In the same year, ninth month	Zechariah vii. viii.
	Subsequent to the fourth year of Darius Hystaspes	Zechariah ix—xiv.
515	Darius 6.	Ezra vi. ver. 15, *&c.*
462	Ahasuerus 3.	Esther i.
461	Ahasuerus 4.	Esther ii. ver. 1—16.
458	Ahasuerus 7.	Ezra vii—x.
	In the same year	Esther ii. ver. 16—21.
457	Ahasuerus 8.	Esther ii. ver. 21, *&c.*
453	Ahasuerus 12.	Esther iii. iv. v, *&c.*
445	Ahasuerus 20.	Nehemiah i—iii, *&c.*
433	Ahasuerus 32.	Nehemiah xiii. ver. 6.
429	Ahasuerus 36.	Malachi i—iv.
428	Ahasuerus 37.	Nehemiah xiii. ver. 6, *&c.*
296	Ptolemy Soter 9.	The Canon of the Old Testament completed, by adding two books of Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, and Malachi; by Simon the Just.

THE

THE

PREFACE.

ONE may divide men into two general classes. Some are without any knowledge of a Deity, or sense of Religion: travellers tell us, at in the *West-Indies*, the eastern parts of *Tartary*, and some places of *rica*, such people are to be found. I know this is a fact which is sputed by others; and *Fabricius*, a divine of the Palatinate, pretends at he has solidly confuted it. If this fact should be thought doubtful, it is known at least, that some persons may be found here and there the world, who look upon the existence of a Deity as upon a fable, d who ridicule all acts of religious worship whatsoever: but one may o say, that if he compare these with the rest of the world, they make e least and worst part of mankind, though many of them affect to live orally well.

All the rest of the world make profession that they own a God; that to say, a most perfect, eternal, and independent Being; that he go-rns all things by his providence; that there is a difference between od and evil; that man doth well or ill in those actions which depend his liberty: from whence they equally conclude, that man was signed for the duties of the religion, that society without it would be re robbery; and that, as it is hard to conceive that men should be holly destroyed by death, so it is directly contrary to the sentiments of nscience to deny all rewards for virtue, or punishments for vice, after s life.

All the diversities of religion amongst men are reducible to two kinds. The first is, of those who suppose that there is more than one God; d this is the belief of all *Pagans* in general.

The second is, of those that acknowledge one only God; such are the *ws*, *Christians*, and *Mahometans*.

Now, as for the cure of different diseases several remedies are made of, so it is visible, that, to deliver men of their various prejudices, we ust take very different methods.

The

The ignorance of those barbarous people in the *Indies*, *Tartary*, an *Africa*, must be removed, by teaching them the first principles, an making them apply the little sense they have left them of good and evi right and wrong, to the fundamental maxims of religion.

Atheists must be convinced by reflexions upon those principles whic they admit, by shewing that the truths which they reject are the natu ral consequences of those principles which they dare not dispute.

To convince the Heathen, who suppose many gods, we must examin their principles, and confute them; which is the easiest thing in th world; the wisest men having formerly acknowledged, as they also ow to this very day, that there is but one God.

And indeed it seems, that the greatest part of philosophers did ow a plurality of gods, only in compliance with the opinions of the people which it was dangerous to contradict.

And as for the *Jews*, forasmuch as they agree with the *Christians* an *Mahometans* about the unity of God, we are only to prove to them th truth of that which is the very essence of the *Christian Religion*, in op position to their prejudices: one may prove this against the *Jews* with out any trouble, because they are agreed in most of those principle which the *Christian Religion* supposes. So likewise it is easily established against the *Mahometans*, who grant the truth of *Christian Religion* i general, but pretend that it ought to give place to *Mahometanism*, as th Law ought to give place to the Gospel, preached by Jesus Christ.

My design is not to prosecute every one of these ways in particular There are books enough in the world which solidly prove the necessity of Religion against all sorts of Atheists, as well those who are so through ignorance, as those who profess themselves such from love to libertinism and to pass for men of a mighty reach.

There are also several famous authors who have made it evident, tha reason alone is sufficient to overthrow all *Pagan* religions whatsoever.

I am resolved to follow a more compendious and sure method, that is to demonstrate the truth of the *Christian Religion*, considered by itself.

In short, it is impossible (considering the opposition there is between the *Christian Religion* and all the other religions in the world) but that if the *Christian Religion* should be the true, all others must be false in those articles wherein they essentially differ from it.

And on the other hand, one cannot explain those arguments which clearly evince the truth of Christianity, without convicting all other religions of falsehood, because they are destitute of those proofs which are peculiar to the *Christian Religion*.

I know wery well that there are several ways which lead to the end which I propose. Men that think much, wish that a perfect conformity of the *Christian Religion* with the conscience of man might be demonstrated, from reflexions on the heart of man, and the dictates of it, which to them would be a convincing and demonstrative proof.

Others apply themselves to a speculative examination of the doctrines and proofs of the *Christian Religion*, to shew their conformity with the notions of reason. I will not deny but that both these employ themselves usually in this sort of study, and that truth finds a considerable support from their meditations.

But

But how uſeful ſoever they may be, I have rather choſen to follow nother courſe, as thinking it of more advantage, ſolidly to eſtabliſh the cts which the *Chriſtian Religion* propoſeth; which appears to me to be ore proper to perſuade all ſorts of readers, and better levelled to the rdinary capacity of thoſe who newly enter upon the examination of is truth.

And as the neceſſity of revelation is generally owned by heathens, and y all other nations of the world, I thought it a thing altogether unneeſſary to enter upon the examination of ſeveral abſtracted queſtions, uch as theſe: whether there be any natural knowledge of God, whether nen are naturally inclined to be religious, and the like. When I ſhall ave firmly proved, that God revealed himſelf, that he preſcribed a ſerice to the firſt men, who left the rules of it to all their poſterity, from vhence all the religion that ever was, or is yet in the heathen world, vas derived, I ſhall have prevented many very unprofitable diſputes, nd which can only perplex the mind by their obſcurity.

I have therefore confined myſelf to certain conſiderations, which do o eſtabliſh the truth of the books of the Old and New Teſtament, as by their union they firmly prove the truth of the *Chriſtian Religion*.

I hope that it will not be thought needful for me to demonſtrate, that he *Mahometan* religion ought not to aboliſh the Chriſtian, as the Chriſtians pretend that the *Chriſtian Religion* abrogated the ceremonial part of the *Jewiſh* worſhip.

As ſoon as an underſtanding Reader ſhall make ſome reflexions upon the nature of the arguments which demonſtrate the truth of the *Chriſtian Religion*, he may eaſily perceive that God never framed the model of that religion which the *Mahometans* would obtrude upon us.

REFLEXIONS

REFLEXIONS

UPON THE

BOOKS OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURE,

For the Eſtabliſhing of the Truth

OF THE

CHRISTIAN RELIGION.

CHAP. I.

Concerning the FUNDAMENTALS *of the* CHRISTIAN RELIGION.

WE are to conſider three things in the Chriſtian Religion; the Matters of Fact it propounds to us for true, the Promiſes it affords us, and the Worſhip it commands.

The Matters of Fact it propounds to us as true, are—that God created the world; that he formed the firſt man, from whom the reſt of mankind have been propagated; that a while after this man was created, he violated the law God had given him; and that whereas he deſerved to have periſhed for this his diſobedience, God was pleaſed, inſtead thereof, to comfort him with the hopes of a Saviour which was to be born of the ſeed of his wife; that God hath actually ſent this Saviour into the world, which comprehends the whole economy of Chriſt, viz. his birth, life, preaching, miracles, death, reſurrection, and aſcenſion into heaven, &c.

The

The Promiſes it vouchſafes, are the forgiveneſs of our ſins, the re-
rection of our bodies, and a ſtate abſolutely happy for ever in
ven.

And laſtly, the Worſhip of divine ſervice it preſcribes conſiſts in obe-
nce to the law of God, in prayer for the pardon of our ſins, and his
tection, and in a grateful acknowledgment of what we owe him for
his benefits towards us.

The firſt of theſe three parts of the Chriſtian Religion, viz. the truth
the Matters of Fact it relates, may be ſaid to be the foundation of the
er two, viz. the Promiſes and commands.

It is impoſſible to be perſuaded, that God hath created this world in
ich we live, and made mankind of one and the ſame blood; that after
fall he promiſed to ſave men, and did actually redeem them in ſending
ſus Chriſt, who ſuffered death, and being raiſed the third day aſcended
o heaven, &c. I ſay, it is impoſſible to look upon theſe facts as true
thout being aſſured that God will accompliſh the promiſes he hath
ade to us.

And it is as evident that we cannot be convinced of the truth of theſe
tters, without being ſenſible of a ſtrong obligation laid upon us to per-
m all the duties of the Chriſtian religion.

As ſoon as a man reflects upon his being God's creature, he finds himſelf
turally obliged to obey God univerſally, according to his utmoſt abi-
y: but when he comes further to believe, that God did not deſtroy the
ſt man for his diſobedience, but was graciouſly pleaſed to promiſe him
Saviour for himſelf and all his poſterity; and when moreover he is aſ-
red, that God hath really ſent this Saviour in the way and manner the
ſpel relates to us; we cannot conceive but that he muſt find himſelf
der the higheſt engagements imaginable of rendering to God a reli-
ous obedience, and believing his promiſes.

But there is yet another obligation whereby man is bound to obey God,
pray to him, and to offer him all manner of religious worſhip: God,
redeeming him, hath obtained a new claim to, and right over him; and
nore indiſpenſable obligation is laid upon man to ſubmit himſelf to God,
all religious concerns, as being not only created but alſo redeemed by
m.

Reaſon acknowledgeth, that if the truth of theſe things be once ad-
tted, nothing can be more juſt and natural than thoſe conſequences
nich the Chriſtians thence infer.

All the difficulty therefore that occurs in this matter, conſiſts in the
oof of thoſe facts which the Chriſtian religion propounds to us; that is
ſay, in proving the creation of the world, the fall of man, the promiſe
a redeemer, his coming into the world, his miracles, death, reſurrection,
cenſion into heaven, &c. which are the foundations of the Chriſtian
eligion. And indeed theſe are the very matters of which Atheiſts and
bertines require a ſolid proof.

And it doth the more concern us to ſatisfy their demands, foraſmuch
the Jews, who are ſcattered throughout the whole world, do oppoſe
r aſſertion, that the promiſe of ſending the Meſſiah is already accom-
iſhed, though they agree upon the matter with us in all other articles.
oreover, the performing this taſk may very much contribute to the con-
verſion

verſion of a great number of bad Chriſtians, whoſe fall and continuance in vices and licentiouſneſs is to be aſcribed to their being ſo weakly perſuaded of the truth of theſe Fundamentals, and that becauſe they have never conſidered of them with ſufficient attention.

CHAP. II.

That the Christian Religion *is founded upon Proofs of Matter of Fact.*

FORASMUCH as, in order to eſtabliſh the truth of the Chriſtian Religion, we confine ourſelves at preſent to thoſe Proofs which make out the Matters of Fact it propoſes; omitting all other arguments which may evidence the truth of it, though poſſibly no leſs convincing; it is obvious, that the proofs we are to produce in confirmation of them, muſt be ſuch as are proper to evince the truth of things long ſince paſt and done.

If we were treating of the events of the time we live in, it might be juſtly required that we ſhould produce eye-witneſſes of them: but forasmuch as the queſtion here is concerning matters long ſince paſt, it is natural for us to have recourſe to hiſtory, which furniſheth us with the relations of thoſe who were eye-witneſſes of the ſame; this being the only way left us to confirm our belief of things at ſo great a diſtance from us.

I am beholden to hiſtory only for the knowledge I have of a *Cyrus*, an *Alexander*, or a *Cæſar*; and yet having read the account they give me of them, I find them matters I can no way rationally doubt of.

I acknowledge that the certainty we have of things long ſince paſt, is much inferior to that which we have of matters confirmed to us by eye-witneſſes. Nevertheleſs, becauſe it is evident that the events of ancient times cannot be confirmed but by proofs of this nature, it has never entered into the minds of any to account the exiſtence of ſuch men as *Cyrus* and *Alexander* for fables, upon the pretence that none now alive did ever ſee them, or becauſe there are ſcarce any traces left of thoſe empires of which they were the founders.

Indeed the certainty we have of theſe things is ſuch, as nothing can be ſuperadded to it; for though it be founded on the authority of hiſtorians who lived many ages ago, yet withal we are to conſider that the matters related do not only carry the idea of probability and truth along with them, but that they are the very ground and foundation of all the hiſtories of following ages; which cannot be queſtioned, if we conſider the connexion and dependence of the things related, according to the light of ſenſe, and the equity of reaſon.

A Matter

A Matter of Fact then is accounted certain, when it is atteſted by
e who were eye-witneſſes of it, when recorded by an hiſtorian who
d amongſt thoſe who had perfect knowledge of it; when the matter is
gainſaid or contradicted by any; if we find it penned at a time when
things could not be related by any otherwiſe than indeed they were,
nout expoſing themſelves to public deriſion; and laſt of all, when
matter is found to be of that nature, as none could be ignorant of
ither becauſe it was the intereſt of every one to be informed of it,
ecauſe the thing was ſo public that it could not be hid from any;
aſtly, becauſe of its natural connexion with all thoſe other events
ch neceſſarily depend on it.

To ſpeak plain, it is very unjuſt to demand either more proofs, or ſuch
re of another nature, for the confirmation of the truth of our reli-
n, than are required to verify any other matters of fact. Why ſhould
the teſtimony of *Noah*'s children be ſufficient to conclude there was
a man as *Methuſalem*, in caſe they aſſure us that they have ſeen him?
why ſhould not the teſtimony of *Methuſalem* be of credit enough to
ve there was ſuch a man as *Adam*, if he avers that he ſaw him, and
verſed with him? Do we not every day give credit to the account
ch old men give us of their predeceſſors, eſpecially when we find that
t they relate hath an exact reference and connexion with thoſe things
are eye-witneſſes of?

ut it is an eaſy thing to make it appear, that the proofs which evi-
ce the truth of the matters which our religion propoſeth, are infinitely
e ſtrong and convincing.

ll the circumſtances we can imagine proper to evince the truth of
relation, do concur to place the matters recorded in holy Scripture
ond the reach of doubt or uncertainty.

Ve account the ſingle teſtimony of an hiſtorian a ſufficient proof that
e was once a very famous temple at *Delphos* or *Epheſus*, notwith-
ding that all the monuments remaining at this day to confirm his re-
n be very doubtful and defective. Whereas I ſhall make it appear
an entire nation, yea, many nations, do atteſt the truth of thoſe mat-
which the Chriſtian Religion propoſes; and that all the actions, diſ-
ſes, and whole ſeries of events thereto relating, do furniſh us with
nfinite number of characters which invincibly ſignalize the truth of
holy Scriptures.

CHAP. III.

CHAP. III.

Some General Remarks, in order to eſtabliſh the Truth of Holy SCRIPTURE.

FORASMUCH as I have undertaken to prove the truth the Matters of Fact contained in our Religion from the teſtimon of the penmen of the Old and New Teſtament, it will be proper, i order to the executing of my deſign, to begin with a general proof of th truth of the ſaid books; which will not be difficult, if one makes th following remarks.

The firſt is, That it appears from the five books of *Moſes*, that h wrote the hiſtory of the creation of the world, and of the promiſe the Meſſiah; of the deluge, the riſe and pedigree of the ſeveral natio of the world, of the diviſion of tongues; and in particular, the hiſto of the family of *Abraham* until the entering of the children of *Iſrael* int *Paleſtina*, 2552 years after the creation of the world.

The ſecond is, That the following books, viz. of *Joſhua*, *Judge Ruth*, the four books of *Kings*, of *Chronicles*, with the books of *Ezr* and *Nehemiah*, are a continuation of the ſaid hiſtory, from the enteri of the *Jews* into *Paleſtina*, until their re-eſtabliſhment in the ſaid cou try, about the year of the world 3600. Here we read the conqueſt *Paleſtina* under the conduct of *Joſhua*, how it was divided amongſt th tribes after they had deſtroyed, drove out, or ſubdued, the inhabitan thereof; how often they were brought into bondage by the borderi nations, whoſe riſe and pretenſions *Moſes* ſets down. Here we have r corded the ſeveral names and actions of the judges which God fro time to time raiſed to the Iſraelites, to reſtore them to their firſt eſtat Here we have an account of the eſtabliſhment of a kingly governme amongſt them, which happened about the year 2909; as likewiſe of th diviſion of this people into two kingdoms, which for three ages tog ther were moſt oppoſite in their intereſts, and made great wars again each other, as well as as againſt their neighbouring ſtates. We find he the utter ruin of the moſt puiſſant of theſe two ſtates, viz. that of *Iſra* by the arms of the kings of *Aſſyria*, about the year of the world 328 and after that, the deſtruction of that of *Judah* by *Nebuchadnezzar* ki of the *Chaldeans*, *anno mundi* 3416. And laſt of all, we have an accou of the *Jews* reſtoration by *Cyrus* king of *Perſia*, and the ſtate of the *Je* under his ſucceſſors.

The third thing obſervable is, That in the remaining books of t Old Teſtament we find ſeveral hiſtorical relations relating to both kin doms, with ſeveral prophecies relating to their decay and reſtoratio as likewiſe many diſcourſes of morality and piety; and that all theſe r lations and prophecies appear to have been writ at ſuch a time, and wi thoſe circumſtances, which have a natural reference to what the oth books recite to us, and an eſſential relation to the books and laws *Moſes*, which we find to be the foundation of all theſe prophecies, rel tion

ns, and whatſoever elſe we find there concerning their government or igion.

The fourth is, That the books of the New Teſtament contain an exact ation of the life of Jeſus Chriſt, who appeared to the world under e reign of *Tiberius*, of the eſtabliſhment of his religion in the world, gether with ſome diſputes with the Jews, who refuſed to own him for e Meſſiah promiſed by the Prophets; and, laſtly, prophecies, declaring at in proceſs of time was to happen both to the Jews and Chriſtians til the end of the world. Theſe books take the truth of *Moſes*'s wri- gs every where for granted, as alſo of the other ſacred writings of the d Teſtament, both hiſtorical, prophetical, and moral.

Theſe four particulars do in a manner give us an entire idea of the ly Scripture; and we ſhall ſcarcely ſtand in need of ought elſe to nifeſt the truth of thoſe writings, if we conſider thoſe undiſputable tters of fact I am now to ſpeak of, and will but make ſome very na- ral reflexions upon them.

The firſt is, That the Chriſtians, notwithſtanding their being divided o ſeveral ſects and parties preſently after our Saviour's time, have, d do ſtill, in all places, every firſt day of the week, read the books of e New Teſtament tranſlated into their reſpective languages; ſo that appears abſolutely impoſſible that any ſpurious writings ſhould have en ſlipped in amongſt them.

The ſecond is, That as the Chriſtians have had the books of the Old eſtament amongſt them in Greek theſe 1600 years, ſo the Heathens had em in that language 300 years before, being tranſlated by order of one the *Ptolemy*'s kings of *Egypt*, whither a conſiderable party of the Jews re carried, after that *Alexander* the Great had conquered the greateſt rt of *Aſia*, having overthrown the empire of *Perſia*, to which the Jews re in ſubjection.

The third is, That though the Jews had not all the books of the Old eſtament from the beginning of their commonwealth, they that fol- wed the party of *Jeroboam*, and formed the kingdom of *Iſrael*, having dy had the five books of *Moſes* amongſt them; yet, notwithſtanding eir irreconcilable hatred againſt the houſe of *David*, they have moſt igiouſly preſerved the ſaid books from *anno mundi* 3030, in which the viſions of the two kingdoms happened, even until this day.

The fourth and laſt is, That as the Jews every where, at this day, d the books of *Moſes* and of the Prophets each ſabbath-day (which is o obſerved by the Samaritans), and the Chriſtians read them every t day of the week; ſo the Jews have always continued to read them a long ſeries of ages, as eſteeming it a great part of the ſanctification the ſabbath. Beſides which, they alſo ſolemnly read them every ſeventh ar, in obedience to a law of *Moſes*, as being one of the principal parts their religion.

I ſay, that the ſole conſideration of theſe matters of fact (which are diſputable) are ſufficient to prove in general the truth of the books of e Old and New Teſtament.

Firſt then, I affirm, that it is as ridiculous to maintain, that the oks of the Old and New Teſtament, tranſlated into ſo many lan- ages, cited by an infinite number of authors, and which have been the

ſubject of various diſputes from the very times of the Apoſtles, or ſoon after, ſhould be ſuppoſititious, as to aver that the books of *Juſtinian*, or *Mahomet*'s Alcoran, have been falſly obtruded on the world under their names. I ſpeak now only of the books themſelves, not of the truth of the hiſtory they contain.

Secondly, It is ridiculous to ſuppoſe that the books of the Old Teſtament were forged ſince the time of *Ptolemy Philadelphus*, foraſmuch as they have been in the hands of the heathens themſelves ever ſince that time.

Thirdly, It is as inconſiſtent to ſuppoſe them contrived ſince the time of the ſeparation of the ten tribes from *Judah*, becauſe we find the books of *Moſes* among the Samaritans, who have preſerved them ever ſince their revolt, without any other change but what is incident to all manuſcripts that paſs through many hands.

I grant indeed that the Samaritans have none of the other books of the Old Teſtament; but this being to be looked upon only as an effect of their departure from the kingdom of *Judah*, it cannot in the leaſt ſhake the certainty we have of thoſe books. For, firſt, the three other tribes had them, and preſerved them with the greateſt care, eſteeming them of Divine authority. Secondly, there were alſo reaſons of ſtate which made the kings of *Iſrael* not to regard the diviſions made by *Joſhua* of the land of *Canaan*, nor the authority of the prieſthood; which reaſons of ſtate (hereafter mentioned) were the cauſe why the ten tribes would not allow the ſame authority to ſome of thoſe books which were written before their revolt, as thoſe of *Samuel*, and the writings of *David* and *Solomon*, which they did to the Pentateuch of *Moſes*. Moſt of the others we know were penned ſince the diviſion of the two kingdoms, and ſo did more particularly reſpect the kingdom of *Judah*, and ſome of them after the carrying away of the ten tribes by the Aſſyrians.

Thus we ſee the truth of theſe books, and more eſpecially thoſe of *Moſes*, confirmed till the time of the revolt of the ten tribes, and confirmed beyond exception; at leaſt far beyond the certainty we can have of the truth of any other book in the world. It remains only now to examine, whether as to the books of *Moſes* we find not the ſame certainty, when we look back from the departure of the ten tribes to the time of *Moſes*; that is to ſay, whether there be the leaſt probability that they were forged in any part of that interval of about 580 years.

I ſay then, in the fourth place, that it is no leſs ridiculous to ſuppoſe them forged during that period. Firſt, becauſe it is impoſſible that theſe books ſhould have been forged in the form we now ſee them, but that the forgery muſt have been apparent to all the world. Nothing could be more notorious, than whether the Jews did read the law of *Moſes* every ſabbath-day in all their families or ſynagogues, and every ſeventh year beſides: nothing was of more eaſy obſervation than whether they did keep their three ſolemn feaſts, viz. that of the paſſover, pentecoſt, and of tabernacles: nothing could be more apparent than whether the Jews did obey the laws contained in the Pentateuch, whether relating to particular perſons, to tribes, or their lands, and the manner of poſſeſſing of them. Indeed, nothing can be imagined more abſurd, than to ſuppoſe

an

n inſenſible change wrought either in the form of their civil govern-ent, or the ceremonies of their religion.

Indeed it is an unſufferable piece of boldneſs to charge the Jews with rging theſe books of *Moſes*, or adulterating of them in this period of me, when it appears they have kept them without any alteration for ıe ſpace of 2700 years, as hath been ſhewed already. If it be ſaid, that ıe Jews being divided into two kingdoms, and diſperſed into diſtant ountries, were not in a condition to forge or adulterate any of the ſaid ooks, becauſe it might eaſily have been diſcovered; it may be anſwered, ıat the ſame reaſons took place in this interval of 580 years: for, om the time of *Moſes* to *Rehoboam*, they were not only greatly divided nongſt themſelves, but almoſt continually ſubject to neighbouring ates, who ſubdued them by turns, as we ſee in the book of *Judges*.

Moreover we are to take notice, Firſt, that theſe books of *Moſes* are ıe riſe and foundation of the laws and cuſtoms of the heathens, as well : of their fictions, which we ſhall have occaſion to point at in the ſequel f this diſcourſe.

Secondly, that the hiſtory contained in the Pentateuch is evidently onfirmed by the following books of *Joſhua* and *Judges*, which have an ſential reference to the ſame, and contain a relation of the public acts f many nations, atteſted and acknowledged by heathen authors, who ere the mortal enemies of the Jews.

Thirdly, that the ſaid books are ſo cloſely linked and related to thoſe ublic and known actions, that it is impoſſible to ſeparate the laws they ontain from the matters of fact atteſted by Pagan hiſtory, or to be ig-orant that the form of the Jewiſh government was nothing elſe but an xecution of the laws contained in the Pentateuch, which equally lays own that platform of their policy and worſhip.

My buſineſs at preſent only is to hint theſe general reflexions concern-ng the truth of the books of the Old and New Teſtament; though the quel will oblige me to make ſome more particular reflexions upon each ook, when I ſhall come to conſider the ſeveral relations they contain.

I now come to the matter in hand, beginning with the book of *Geneſis*; here we find an account of the creation of the world, the forming of an, the fall, the promiſe of the Meſſiah, the propagation of mankind, ıe deluge, with other matters, until the death of *Joſeph*, which contains ıe hiſtory of the world for the ſpace of 2369 years.

CHAP. IV.

hat the Teſtimony of MOSES *concerning the Creation of the World, and the Promiſe of the Meſſiah, is unqueſtionable.*

FORASMUCH as amongſt thoſe matters which *Moſes* relates in the book of *Geneſis*, that of the Creation of the World in ſeven days, id of the Promiſe of the *Meſſiah*, are ſuch upon which all the reſt do

depend (as I ſhall ſhew hereafter), it is evident that I muſt make it my buſineſs in a ſpecial manner to evince the truth of the ſame.

Towards the confirmation of which matters of fact; the one of which is, that God created a firſt man; the other, that God had promiſed in due time to ſend the *Meſſiah* for redemption of mankind from the puniſhment of ſin; I ſhall propoſe the following remarks.

Moſes, the great law-giver of the *Jews*, laid theſe two matters of fact as the baſis of the laws he was to publiſh; and he relates them to us, as things which were not only known to him, and ſome others of the *Jewiſh* nation, but to all the people of the world, and particularly the whole nation amongſt whom he lived.

To underſtand the force of this argument, we muſt mind three things: the firſt is, the nature of the matters themſelves; the other is, the character of him that relates them; and the third, the uſe *Moſes* makes of them.

For the firſt, nothing was more needful to be known than theſe two things before us; they were matters which *concern* the whole world, and of which every one ought to be informed; they are matters about which it is not eaſy to be deceived, every one being in a condition to ſatisfy himſelf about them, and of which conſequently they could not but be moſt thoroughly informed.

I dare maintain that there are no facts in profane hiſtory of importance comparable to theſe of the creation of the world, and the promiſe of the *Meſſiah*, as *Moſes* has related them.

2. And as for the author who relates theſe points, it is as plain that his character did wonderfully contribute to the making of his book famous. He was a man illuſtrious, as well by reaſon of his education, as the rank he held amongſt men; a man equally expoſed to the judgment of enemies and friends, and who could not vent the leaſt thing contrary to truth, in matters of great importance, without ſeeing himſelf immediately refuted, or rather without expoſing himſelf to public ſcorn.

Beſides I aver, and am ready to maintain, that we find no author of ſo illuſtrious a character as *Moſes* was, or who is diſtinguiſhed with ſo many eſſential marks of faithfulneſs and veracity, as appears throughout the whole tenour of his writings.

3. This will appear more evidently when we conſider the uſe to which *Moſes* deſigns theſe two relations of the creation of the world, and the promiſe of the *Meſſiah*.

In a word, his deſign was not, in furniſhing his books with the recitals of theſe important facts, to engage others to read them with more attention, or to get himſelf reputation by exciting a curioſity in people for his books. This would not have been becoming the gravity and wiſdom of ſo great a legiſlator, of whom all ſucceeding ages have borrowed their laws.

It is apparent, that his end in the recording of theſe matters was to inſpire with a ſenſe of piety and religion, thoſe who were committed to his charge.

This is that which in general we may obſerve about theſe matters; but more particularly it is certain, that *Moſes* his end, in recording the oracles

oracles by which God promiſed to *Abraham* the eſtabliſhing his poſterity n the land of *Canaan*, was to repreſent to the *Jews* the right they had to hat land, according to the deſign and intent of the Divine wiſdom.

But without making this particular reflexion, it is clear that the law ook its beginning at the twelfth of *Exodus*, where God preſcribes to his eople the manner of celebrating the paſſover; at leaſt, this is the firſt aw which God gave them through the miniſtry of *Moſes:* but foraſmuch s *Moſes* his end was to juſtify in the minds of his people, the deſign he ad to make them leave *Egypt*, as well as their pretenſions to the land of *Canaan*, whither he was to lead them; it was natural for him to lay be- ore them the ground of thoſe pretenſions, which he could not do without elating the whole ſeries of the hiſtory until the time of their bondage in *Egypt*, which we read in *Geneſis*; the greateſt part of which only con- erns the anceſtors of that people, after that *Moſes* had firſt laid down he grounds of religion, and that which was known to all nations.

Let us now imagine to ourſelves a man endeavouring all of a ſudden o introduce into the world the belief of things ſo far diſtant from com- non apprehenſion as theſe two points muſt needs be, viz. that of the reation, and the promiſe of Chriſt, in caſe we ſuppoſe them generally nknown: let us yet further conceive a man not only relating thoſe hings, but making them the foundation of a new ſort of laws never efore heard of. Is there any wit or judgment in ſuch an undertaking? Can we therefore ſuppoſe that *Moſes*, whoſe writings teſtify his great viſdom, ſhould ever have entertained ſuch unaccountable thoughts?

I dare aver that there was never any legiſlator ſo ſtupid and inconſi- lerate, as to pretend to engage a whole people to ſubmit themſelves to he yoke of obedience, and to receive a great number of laws reſpecting heir civil government and religion, by declaring to them two fictions, of which they had never before had the leaſt idea.

It is alſo very conſiderable, that theſe things are not recited by *Moſes* as a preface to the Decalogue, as if then firſt they had been propoſed to *Moſes*, or the people by God; but *Moſes* ſets them down as truths known to them all, and as principles univerſally admitted, and ſuch as the mere mentioning of them could not but ſtrongly engage the *Jews* to render a ready obedience to the laws which God gave to *Moſes* in their preſence of the Divine authority, of which their very ſenſes were con- vinced.

Let us alſo conſider the nature of thoſe things, the relation of which *Moſes* has joined with theſe two general points, to make an impreſſion on the minds of the *Jews*. Let us conſider the account he gives them of their anceſtors, nearer or farther off, whom he repreſents as equally informed of theſe matters, as having ſeverally delivered the knowledge of them to their children, and having joined to theſe firſt truths of the creation, and the promiſe of a Saviour, many other notions thereon de- pending, and which tied their hopes and expectations to the land of *Canaan*. And now judge whether *Moſes* were not to be accuſed of great folly and ſenſeleſsneſs, if he had proceeded to make ſuch a vaſt people (all of the ſudden) to receive for truths publicly and generally owned, what indeed was nothing but the moſt ridiculous and ill-cohering ro- mance that ever was broached.

Now, ſince as it is viſible (taking in the circumſtances I have hinted) that the authority of ſuch on hiſtorian and law-giver as *Moſes* was, relating ſuch important matters, cannot be called in queſtion; it follows, that the Atheiſt can have nothing to object againſt his teſtimony, with the leaſt ſhadow or pretence of reaſon. So that we may already aſſert, that there is nothing better atteſted than the creation of the world, and the promiſe of Chriſt, which are the immovable foundations of the Chriſtian Religion.

Nevertheleſs, for a more evident conviction, we are willing, before we draw this concluſion, to make it appear how weak and inconſiderable all thoſe objections are, which Atheiſts can poſſibly frame againſt what *Moſes* relates concerning theſe matters.

What can they with reaſon object? Perhaps they'll ſay, that *Moſes* is not the author of *Geneſis*, but that it was foiſted in under his name, and conſequently, that whatſoever is built upon the authority of *Moſes* and his evidence is all without ground; or they may object, that, if *Moſes* be indeed the author of *Geneſis*, he lived at ſuch a diſtance of time from the things which he relates, that it makes void the authority of his writings. They may moreover alledge, that *Moſes* relates things impoſſible, and of which therefore thoſe that mentioned them before, the things themſelves being ſo long ſince paſt and done, could not be fully informed of, and that they may well be ſuppoſed greatly changed and altered by a tradition of ſo many ages. They may alſo alledge, that according to the common opinion, *Moſes* penned not theſe things as an hiſtorian, but as a prophet; and that the apprehenſion of moſt concerning his books are, that he wrote of things whereof the knowledge before his time was very obſcure and confuſed, or rather were generally unknown.

They may object againſt theſe relations of *Moſes*, that which the moſt ancient people, ſuch as the *Ægyptians*, *Chaldeans*, and *Chineſe*, alledge for their antiquity, which far ſurpaſſeth the date of the world according to *Moſes*.

Theſe are the principal ways to aſſault the truths which *Moſes* relates; either by maintaining with the Atheiſts, on one hand, that the things which *Moſes* relates are indeed mentioned by the authors, but that they forged them themſelves; or that *Moſes*, being an able and refined politician, deſigned, by creating a belief of theſe matters in the *Jews*, to make them more ſubmiſſive and obedient to him.

In a word, it may be ſaid, that ſuppoſing the books of *Geneſis* to be written by *Moſes*, it was an eaſy matter for him to dictate whatſoever he pleaſed to a people who were under a law that made it capital to call in queſtion the truth of his relations, or the authority of his laws.

This certainly is the fartheſt to which the height of obſtinacy can carry this matter, and the very laſt refuge of the ſtrongeſt prejudice. But it is an eaſy matter to confound the Atheiſts and Libertines in every one of theſe articles, and to ſhew that all their objections do in effect ſerve for nothing elſe but to make a more lively impreſſion of this argument taken from matter of fact, which I have undertaken to ſet forth in a full and clear light.

CHAP. V.

CHAP. V.

That MOSES *is the Author of the Book of* GENESIS.

I SHALL in the ſequel of this diſcourſe make it appear, that we cannot with reaſon conteſt the authority of a tradition which hath thoſe characters which we find in the relations contained in the book of *Geneſis:* the only thing that can be queſtioned in this matter is, whether *Moſes*, the great captain of the *Iſraelites*, and founder of their commonwealth, be the author of it. This therefore is the thing which we ought ſolidly to evince.

Though it ſeems that we might diſpenſe with this trouble; foraſmuch as it is eaſy to ſhew, that the greateſt part of the moſt conſiderable events, which are recorded in the book of *Geneſis*, were generally believed by others as well as the *Jews*.

At leaſt it muſt be granted, that theſe matters have given occaſion to moſt of their fables, viz. to that of the chaos; to that of the marriage of *Peleus* and *Thetis*; for the forming of man, to that of *Prometheus*; to that of *Jupiter*'s continued laughter for the ſeven firſt days of his life, which they looked upon as the original of the ſolemnity of the ſeventh day, known amongſt the heathens; to that of the golden age, and of the deluge; to the name of *Deucalion*; to the fable of *Janus*, to that of the diviſion of the world amongſt *Saturn*'s ſons; to the name of *Jupiter Hammon*; to the fable of the *Titans*, and of the changing of women into ſtatues of ſtone; to the ſtories of the inceſt the gods committed with their daughters; to that of the firing of the world by *Phaëton*; and to a great number of other fictions, which cannot be otherwiſe explained, as the learned have ſhewn at large.

Whoſoever was the author of *Geneſis*, whether *Moſes* or another, ſure it is that he was exactly informed of the matters he relates, and that he lived ſoon after *Joſeph*.

Firſt then I ſay, that it appears he was fully informed of thoſe matters of which he treats: he ſets down the names of the heads or fathers of the ſeveral nations of the world, and does it ſo, that what he ſaith doth very well agree with what the moſt ancient hiſtorians have left us concerning that matter; he ſpeaks of theſe nations, of the countries they poſſeſſed, and their kings, as of things he was perfectly informed of; he very carefully diſtinguiſhes the original of theſe ſeveral nations: and the ſame being at that time commonly known, no hiſtorian could repreſent them otherwiſe than they were, without expoſing himſelf to the laughter of all, by endeavouring to mix fables with relations of this nature.

In the ſecond place, I ſay, that this book was writ by a man that lived ſoon after *Joſeph:* he ſpeaks very exactly of what *Joſeph* did in his place of chief miniſter to *Pharaoh*; in particular, he ſets down the firſt original of the fifth penny which the *Egyptians*, ſo many ages after, continued to pay to their kings, being a thing which no *Egyptian* could be ignorant of.

And laſtly, it is viſible, that this book ſerves for an introduction to *Exodus*, and the following books, which have no other foundation but the truth of thoſe things which are related to us there, and do throughout allude and refer to the ſeveral paſſages of it; and that all matters of religion and worſhip contained in them, are founded upon the truth of the creation, and the promiſe of the *Meſſiah*, which we find in *Geneſis*; and upon the truth of all thoſe other ſucceeding matters of fact, until the coming of the children of *Iſrael* into *Egypt*, when *Joſeph* was chief favourite and miniſter of *Pharaoh*.

But we have yet a more eaſy way to make out that *Moſes*, whoſe hiſtory is contained in *Exodus* and the following books, is the author of *Geneſis*.

For firſt, it cannot be denied that the heathens themſelves have acknowledged *Moſes* for the moſt ancient law-giver: for this, we have the teſtimonies of *Plato*, *Polemus*, *Artapanus*, *Pythagoras*, *Theopompus*, and *Diodorus Siculus*, who places *Moſes* in the front of ſix of the moſt ancient law-givers thus; *Moſes*, *Sauchnis*, *Seſonchoſis*, *Bachoris*, *Amaſis*, and *Darius* father of *Xerxes*.

But further, if, when the *Lacedemonians* tell us of the laws of their law-giver *Lycurgus*, and the *Athenians* of thoſe of their *Solon*, we think ourſelves obliged to believe them, becauſe naturally every nation is ſuppoſed to be a faithful depoſitary of the laws of him who firſt founded their government; yea, if we do not in the leaſt doubt of theſe relations, though there be no people at this day who live according to the laws of *Lycurgus* or *Solon*; can any valuable reaſon be imagined, for us to doubt whether *Moſes* wrote the book of *Geneſis*, when an entire nation have conſtantly averred that he did ſo? I ſay, when all the *Jews*, who continue at this day, do in all places, where they are ſcattered throughout the world equally, and with one conſent, maintain that they received this book from him, together with the laws and worſhip therein contained? nay, when it is notorious that many of them have ſuffered martyrdom in confirmation of this truth?

I omit now to mention the conſent of the Chriſtians, who, though they be not deſcended of *Abraham*, and do not obſerve the greateſt part of the laws of *Moſes*, yet do not ceaſe highly to defend this truth throughout the world, the Goſpel in their ſenſe being nothing elſe but the literal accompliſhment of that promiſe, *The ſeed of the woman ſhall bruiſe the head of the ſerpent.* I ſhall ſhew, in the ſequel of theſe my Reflexions, with how much juſtice they aſſent to this truth; but at preſent I tie myſelf only to the teſtimonies of the *Jews*, and that which confirms the authority thereof.

CHAP. VI.

CHAP. VI.

That the Book of GENESIS *could not be forged under the name of* MOSES.

SHOULD never have done, ſhould I go about to ſet down all the obſervations which might be made in comparing this book of *Geneſis* h other hiſtories commonly known to the world, and whoſe faithfulneſs nqueſtionable. Without entering upon this compariſon, we may dly aſſert, that there is no hiſtory in the world whoſe author we can ſo ſure of, as that *Moſes* was the penman of *Geneſis*.

But I go further, and aſſert, that the *Jews* could not be miſtaken in teſtimonies they give to this truth; which I prove by theſe two re-rks.

The firſt is, That their obſervations, both civil and religious, are at s day founded upon no other principles than thoſe which we find in *neſis*: as, for inſtance, they compute the beginning of their day from preceding evening, they keep the ſabbath, they obſerve circumci-n, they abſtain from eating the muſcle which is in the hollow of the gh, &c. The obſervation of which laws is indeed preſcribed to them the other books of *Moſes*; but the occaſion and ground of them all is where to be found but in *Geneſis*, to which all theſe laws have a natu-relation.

The ſecond is, That the book of *Geneſis* taking for granted, that the ſterity of *Abraham*, as well as his anceſtors, had always obſerved the bath and circumciſion; and the books of *Moſes* ordering the ſame to conſtantly read in every family, to which the ſabbath-day was more culiarly appropriated, and the whole to be read over every ſeventh ar, as we know the *Jews* practice was, according to the law of *Moſes*; e firſt of which injunctions they practice ſtill in all places, and have t off the other, only becauſe they cannot do it now they are out of eir own land; I ſay, ſuppoſing all this, it is abſolutely impoſſible at any other than *Moſes* could have made this book to be received.

The forgery, at the beginning, would have been palpable, even to ildren themſelves: as, for example, let us ſuppoſe that *Solomon* had rmed a deſign of deceiving the people, in publiſhing the book of *Geneſis* r a book of *Moſes*; is it poſſible he ſhould ſo far impoſe on his ople, as to make them to receive the ſaid book all at once, as that hich had been conſtantly read in their families every ſeventh day, and ar, and that for 600 years before his time? and therefore, as a book at had been ſo long in all their families, though indeed it was never ard of by them before that time.

If an impoſtor can create a belief in others, that he hath ſome ſecret mmunication with the Deity, thoſe who are thus perſuaded by him, ill eaſily ſubmit themſelves to his laws; but it is abſolutely impoſſible at a whole people ſhould all at once forget whatſoever they have learned

or

or heard of their parents or forefathers, and inſtead thereof admit tales forged at pleaſure.

Some nations have been ſo ridiculous, to derive themſelves from a f bulous original; but they never fell into ſuch miſtakes about tho things which were at no great diſtance from the time in which th lived.

Beſides, we know that theſe fabulous originals never made ſo live an impreſſion upon the minds of a whole nation, eſpecially the learne amongſt them, as generally to be believed; but we rather find, th they have endeavoured to reconcile them to truth, by ſhewing ſomethin elſe was hinted thereby, as we may ſee by the explication the heathe themſelves have given us of all their fables, and utterly rejected tho which they could not reconcile to good ſenſe.

But in this caſe, we find a whole nation to this very day main taining all the matters of fact related in *Geneſis*, and in particula that of the creation, as of matters whoſe memorial they have con ſtantly celebrated every ſeventh day, ſince the time they firſt hap pened.

Laſtly, It cannot be denied but that this book was conſtantly uſed t be read amongſt the *Jews*, eſpecially on the ſabbath-day, and that unde the name of *Moſes*; for inſtance, ſince the time of Jeſus Chriſt, or ſinc that of *David*: neither can it be denied, but this conſtant reading wa obſerved by virtue of a law contained in the ſaid book. Now, if this law has always been in this book from the firſt appearing of it, which can not be queſtioned, how was it poſſible to forge and foiſt in this book under the name of *Moſes*, the founder of the *Jewiſh* government? I ſay, this book, which, beſides all this, contains ſuch extraordinary matters, and is the very foundation of all their religion.

I will not repeat here what I mentioned in the third chapter, to make the vanity of thoſe men appear, who imagine the book of *Geneſis*, and the four that follow it, might have been forged by others, under *Moſes* his name: yet I think I ought, before I proceed further, to remove a ſeeming difficulty, which is often alledged by this ſort of people: for, ſay they, it cannot be that theſe books were ever read with that care and conſtancy we ſpeak of, becauſe a time can be pointed at, wherein the ſaid book was wholly unknown in the kingdom of *Judah*; and indeed, the hiſtory plainly informs us, that the book of the law was found again in the reign of *Joſias*; from whence they infer that, if it were then un known, it might as well be forged.

But indeed they may conclude from hence, that which willingly we allow them, that there was a time wherein ungodlineſs did prevail, and idolatry was publicly eſtabliſhed in the kingdom of *Judah* itſelf, yet can they not from this inſtance draw any other conſequence which might ſupport their pretenſions.

They muſt needs acknowledge firſt, that the books of *Moſes* were not only amongſt the three tribes, but alſo amongſt the ten, ſince the time of their revolt under *Rehoboam*; that they who were carried by *Salmanaſar* into the land of *Aſſyria*, had the ſaid books amongſt them, as well as thoſe of the ten tribes who were left in their own country. Thus we ſee, that when the king of *Aſſyria* ſent ſome of the prieſts of

Samaria

ria to inſtruct the colony which he had ſettled in their country, in aw of God, it is not ſaid that thoſe prieſts went to borrow the law *Moſes* from them of *Judah*, nor that the ſaid law was altogether un- vn in that country; but only that they had formerly violated the of God, in ſerving ſtrange gods, as they ſtill did; but that, withal, kept the law of God, which to this day is yet found among their erity.

econdly, It is evident that, though the wickedneſs and violence of *Ma- h* cauſed a great change in matters of religion, yet not ſo great but his ſubjects notwithſtanding had ſtill the books of *Moſes* amongſt n, the blood which he ſhed in *Jeruſalem* was an evident ſign that e were ſome godly men left amongſt them, who continued true to r religion, and obſerved the laws of God. Beſides, if we conſider repentance, we muſt conclude, that towards the end of his reign lid in ſome degree re-eſtabliſh the purity of that religion he had be- profaned, a main part of which was the expounding and reading he books of *Moſes*, according to thoſe laws before mentioned.

n the third place it is viſible, that the reaſon why *Hilkiah*, having nd the book of the law in the temple as they were cleanſing and re- ing it, ſent the ſame to *Joſiah*, was not becauſe there was no other n book left in *Judah*, but becauſe the ſaid book being written by the d of *Moſes* himſelf, there ſeemed to be ſomething very extraordinary he finding of it at that very time when they were endeavouring a rmation; and it was this circumſtance which did in a more parti- ar manner excite the zeal of this good prince. And indeed, if we poſe that *Joſiah* had never before ſeen the book of the law, how could nave applied himſelf to the reforming of his country, his people, and temple, in the manner which is recorded in the book of Kings? w could a ſufficient number of copies of it be diſperſed over all his gdom in an inſtant, to inform the people about the ceremonials of the lover, which ſoon after was ſo ſolemnly celebrated by them? Or, v is it poſſible that the *Levites*, the prieſts, and people, could have n all of the ſudden inſtructed in all the points to be obſerved in the forming of that holy ſolemnity.

t is apparent that the ſacred Hiſtorian did for no other reaſon take ice of this circumſtance, that the book found was of *Moſes*'s own hand iting, but to make it appear that their devout reſpect for this book s not wholly ſtifled, as having been by them carefully hid from the y of their idolatrous kings, and laid up in ſome ſecret place of the nple, where now they had ſo happily found it again.

Over and above what hath been ſaid already, we are to obſerve, that w great ſoever the wickedneſs of the kings of *Judah* and *Iſrael* was, as ll as that of their objects, yet the ſame generally conſiſted in nothing e but the imitation of the worſhip of their neighbour nations, as to ne particulars, which though they were forbid by the law, yet they left e far greater part of their religion in full force. This we have an in- nce of in the time of *Ahab*, where we find *Elijah* reproaching the *If- lites* with the monſtruous alliance they had made betwixt the worſhip God and that of *Baal*, which queen *Jeſabel* had introduced.

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All this clearly proves, that the book of *Geneſis*, which is the firſt the books of *Moſes*, was never forged under his name, ſince it was alwa owned as the writing of that famous author, and is ſtill ſo acknowledg by the *Jews* at this day.

CHAP. VII.

That it appears from GENESIS, *that the Sabbath was conſtantly obſerv from the Beginning of the World until* MOSES.

THE other objection of the Atheiſts (ſuppoſing that *Moſes* w the author of *Geneſis*, as we have now proved) is this, that ſeems abſurd to give credit to the relations of a perſon who lived many ages diſtant from the things he recites. To anſwer this objectio we muſt firſt of all declare to them, by what means the memory of th fact which *Moſes* relates was preſerved ſo lively and entire as to giv *Moſes* ſo diſtinct a knowledge of them, and that it was not in his pow to forge or add any thing of his own, it being a thing known to th whole world as well as himſelf.

There is no way whereby we can more ſolidly evince that it is im poſſible the creation of the world ſhould be forged by *Moſes*, than b making it appear, that the law of the ſabbath hath a natural relation t the creation of the world, and that it hath been always conſtantly obſerve from that time until *Moſes*. The ſame alſo will help us clearly to con ceive after what manner the memory of the promiſe of the *Meſſiah* hat been preſerved ſo diſtinct amongſt thoſe that lived ſince the creation unti *Moſes*. We are no ſooner informed that the ſabbath is a ſolemn day ordained at firſt to celebrate and perpetuate the memory of the creation but we judge it impoſſible that ſo important an event, commemorate every ſeventh day, by virtue of a Divine law, ſhould be an impoſture. But foraſmuch as this impoſſibility is grounded on theſe two propoſitions the one, that God gave this law of the ſabbath to the firſt man; th other, that the ſame was obſerved by his poſterity ever ſince, till the time of *Moſes*, and that God only removed it in the law given from mount *Sinai*: theſe are the truths I am now to clear; and it is of more impor tance to be proved, becauſe, though the generality of authors, ancient and modern, *Jews* as well as *Chriſtians*, are of this opinion, yet there are ſome of the Chriſtian fathers who ſeem to deny that the ſabbath was ever obſerved by the Patriarchs. But it will be an eaſy matter to prove from *Moſes*, that the antiquity of the ſabbath is ſuch as I aſſert, and at the ſame time time to demonſtrate the truth of the creation, as well as of the promiſe of *Meſſiah*, which in a manner immediately followed it.

Moſes, in the ſecond chapter of *Geneſis*, expreſſes himſelf thus: *And God bleſſed the ſeventh day and ſanctified it, becauſe that in it he had reſted*

from

ll his work, which he had created (*a*): which words clearly evince
mn conſecration of the ſeventh day to God's ſervice, by its being
a commemoration of his finiſhing the creation of the heavens and
rth.
: becauſe it may be ſaid, that the intent of *Moſes* in this place was
o ſet down the reaſon why God ſet apart this day, of all others,
ſervice, by the law at mount *Sinai*, we are to take notice, that
ppointment was made for man's ſake, already placed in the garden
len. This we may gather from the order *Moſes* obſerves: for he
own firſt the formation of man on the ſixth day, and his being placed
radiſe, which he gives a more particular account of in the ſecond
er; and after theſe, he relates God's reſting from his works, and
nſecration of the ſabbath, with the reaſon of that law which he im-
on man; and then adds, *Theſe are the generations of the heavens and
earth, when they were created, in the day that the Lord God made the
n and the earth.* All that precedes theſe words, is only a relation of
paſſed in the ſeven firſt days; and that which *Moſes* ſets down con-
ng God's bleſſing of the ſeventh day, and his conſecrating it, ought
ll to be accounted a law appointing the ſeventh day for his ſervice,
oſe other bleſſings given to the creatures according to their kinds,
cknowledged as inviolable laws of God, by virtue whereof they
ſt, and are perpetuated, each according to their kind, by the way of
ration.
the ſecond place, it is very remarkable that the Patriarchs main-
d a public worſhip, at leaſt ſince the time of *Seth*; which it was
Tary ſhould be determined to ſome certain day; and ſince we find
even at this time they diſtinguiſhed between beaſts clean and un-
, with reſpect to their ſacrifices, (which they could not do but from
ation) we have much more reaſon to conclude that God had ſet
: a time for his own worſhip and ſervice.
nd, indeed, there are many evident ſigns, that even then the ſeventh
was obſerved (*b*). I will not here peremptorily aſſert that ancient
tion of the *Jews* which tells us, that the ninety-ſecond Pſalm,
ſe title is *a Pſalm for the Sabbath*, was made by *Adam* himſelf, who
made on the evening of the ſabbath: but this I dare aſſert, that it is
rent, that what we read in the eighth chapter of *Geneſis*, (*c*) about
leluge, doth refer to this cuſtom, where we find *Noah* ſending forth
dove and the raven on the ſeventh day, which plainly hints to us his
rving of that day; for it ſeems, that *Noah* having, in an eſpecial
ner, on that ſolemn day, implored the aſſiſtance of God in the
nbly of his family, he expected a particular bleſſing from it.
nd we cannot but make ſome reflexion on that which we read in the
th of *Geneſis* concerning the term of a week ſet apart to the nuptials
eah, where, at the twenty-ſeventh verſe, *Laban* thus expreſſes him-
*Fulfil her week, and we will give thee this alſo, for the ſervice which
ſhalt ſerve with me yet ſeven other years* (*d*). This week here doth ſo
nly ſignify a week of days, that it cannot be more naturally expreſſed;
indeed, all generally underſtand by this week of the marriage-feaſt
of

(*a*) Gen. ii. 3. (*b*) *Kimchi Præfat. in Pſalmos.*
(*c*) Gen. viii. 10. 12. (*d*) Gen. xxix. 27.

of *Leah*, that term of time which in ſucceeding ages hath been cuſtom to allot to nuptial feſtivals, as appears from the book of *Eſther*, wh the wedding feaſt of *Vaſhti* laſted ſeven days; this term of ſeven d having ſo long ſince been conſecrated to nuptial rejoicings.

The ſame we may alſo gather from the time which was ordinarily lotted to mourning for the dead; to which we find the Patriarchs allot a term proportioned to that of their rejoicing. For as we ſee that *Egyptians* mourned ten weeks for *Jacob*, becauſe of his quality, as be the father of *Joſeph*; ſo we find that *Joſeph*, and thoſe that accompan him, mourned ſeven days at his interment in the land of *Canaan*: a as we find, that this cuſtom was perpetually afterwards obſerved by t *Jews*, as appears from *Eccleſiaſticus* xxii. 12. ſo likewiſe we find t ſame obſerved by the *Aſiatics*, as may be ſeen in the hiſtory of *Ammia Marcellinus*, at the beginning of his nineteenth book; and from them paſſed to the Chriſtians, as we find in St. *Ambroſe* (*e*).

Thirdly, It appears from *Exod.* vii. 25. that God obſerved ſev days (*f*) after he had ſmote the river to change the waters thereof in blood; from whence the *Jews* conclude, that the three plagues, v that of blood, of frogs, and of lice, abode on the land of *Egypt* ſix da and were withdrawn on the ſeventh, which is the ſabbath.

We may alſo gather, if we calculate the time exactly, that the *Je* in *Egypt* obſerved the ſabbath. We find from the hiſtory of their depa ture out of *Egypt*, that the ſame happened on a *Thurſday*, being the f teenth of the month *Niſan*; and the day in which they ſung thoſe hym of deliverance, was the ſabbath which God had particularly ſet apart f this week.

It is alſo evident from *Exod.* xvi. that the keeping of the ſabbath w obſerved by the *Iſraelites*, before the law was given on mount *Sina* For we find God ſpeaking there concerning the ſabbath, not as of a thi newly inſtituted, but as of an ancient law, which they were not t tranſgreſs by gathering the manna on that day; for he orders them t gather a double portion the ſixth day, and not to gather any on the ſ venth. We ſee that the *Iſraelites* reſting on the ſeventh day is he ſuppoſed a known and cuſtomary thing, preſcribed to them by a law old.

They who went forth to gather manna on the ſeventh day are repr ſented as tranſgreſſors of a known law, as appears from the words of t Lord to *Moſes*. *How long refuſe ye to keep my commandments and my laws* *Moſes* alſo ſpeaks of the ſabbath, which was to be the next day, as of thing cuſtomary, and received amongſt them. *To-morrow* (ſaith he, *v.* 23.) *is the reſt of the ſabbath of holineſs unto the Lord*; words whic would have been unintelligible to the *Iſraelites*, and expreſſed a law alt gether impracticable, in caſe they had been deſtitute of any further know ledge concerning it, and had not been acquainted that it was the ver day in which the great work of creation had been finiſhed.

My fourth obſervation I take from the very words of the Decalogue where firſt of all we find God ſpeaking in this manner, *Remember th*

Sabba

(*e*) *De fide Reſur. in obitu Sat.* p. 321.

(*f*) Seven days were fulfilled after that the Lord had ſmote the river *Jalkut* in h. l.

h day (*g*); which words clearly import, that the law he gave, was new law, but indeed as old as the world, and which had been ob- by their forefathers. It ſeems probable alſo that God expreſſes lf in theſe terms, becauſe the tyranny of *Pharaoh* had forced them ak this law, by obliging them to deliver their tale of bricks every without excepting the ſabbath, which before he had allowed them p.

is is explained very diſtinctly in the fifth of *Exodus*, and ſeems to been the occaſion of *Moſes*'s demanding ſtraw of *Pharaoh* for the *ites* to go and ſacrifice; in anſwer to which demand, *Pharaoh* (*h*) ſſes himſelf in terms which ſhew that formerly they had obſerved a n that day: however it be, yet thus much is apparent, that God ands them to make their bond ſervants to obſerve the ſabbath, be- the *Egyptians*, by their example, inclined them not to be very care- exempting them from all labour on that day.

reover, in the ſecond place, we are to take notice, that in the laſt s of the fourth commandment, God ſpeaks of it as of a thing for- appointed and determined by him, ſaying, *For in ſix days the Lord heaven and earth, and reſted the ſeventh day, wherefore the Lord bleſſed bbath day, and hallowed it*; which words have a manifeſt and un- ble reference to that which happened the ſeventh day after the crea- and to the law then given to man concerning it.

e may gather from the fourth chapter of the epiſtle to the *Hebrews*, he ſenſe which we have put upon the third verſe of the ſecond of ſis, is the ſame which the *Jews* have always had of it. The Apoſtle, urſing from thoſe words of *David*, Pſal. xcv. *To whom I ſware in rath, that they ſhould not enter into my reſt*, doth ſuppoſe a threefold the firſt of which is the reſt of the ſabbath, of which mention is in the ſecond of *Geneſis*, where we have the firſt inſtitution of it; cond was the reſt in the land of *Canaan* promiſed to the *Jews* upon enduring all thoſe trials in the wilderneſs; the third, the reſt in n, of which the two foregoing were but the figures. He argues fore that theſe words of *David* could not be underſtood concern- he ſabbath day, foraſmuch as from the beginning of the world men ed into that reſt of the ſabbath; and he proves this, by that paſſage *neſis* of which he only cites the firſt words, viz. that *God reſted venth day from all his works*; as ſuppoſing that the *Jews*, to whom rote, had no need of having the following words quoted to them, h tells us, that *God bleſſed the ſeventh day and hallowed it*: that is, he crated the ſame to his worſhip and ſervice, foraſmuch as nothing nore publicly and univerſally known amongſt them, the obſervation e ſabbath being a thing generally received, even before the giving e law.

d, indeed, though *Philo* the *Jew* be of opinion that the practice of nizing that day had ſuffered ſome interruption, and that for this n the law of the ſabbath was given to *Moſes*, yet it is well known f all, that *Ariſtobulus* the *Peripatetic* (*i*), in a treatiſe dedicated by o *Ptolemy*, ſurnamed *Philadelphus*, cites ſeveral paſſages of *Homer*, *Heſiod*,

(*g*) Exod. xx. 8. (*h*) Exod. v. 5.
(*i*) *Euſeb.* præp. Evang. l. 13. c. 12.

Heſiod, and *Linus*, heathen poets, which mention the ſeventh day as feſtival and ſolemn day, becauſe all things were finiſhed in the ſame.

In the next place, it is notorious, that if ſome of the fathers, as *Juſt Martyr* and *Tertullian* writing againſt the *Jews*, have denied that the P triarchs obſerved the ſeventh day, they did ſo rather with regard to t rigour of that law which forbad all manner of work on that day up pain of death, (which was ſuperadded by God to the firſt law of t ſabbath) than to the obſervation of the ſabbath, as it was a day appoint to make a ſolemn commemoration of the creation of the world.

In a word, we are to take notice, that the difference which God mak between the ſabbath obſerved by the Patriarchs, and that which he a pointed to the *Jews*, did conſiſt in two things. Firſt, in that God d impoſe an abſolute neceſſity upon the *Jews* to abſtain from all manner work, even to the very dreſſing of meat, neceſſary for the ſupport life: we find this diſtinction clearly expreſſed in the law which G gave concerning the firſt and ſeventh day of the feaſt of unleavened bread for he abſolutely forbids all manner of work on theſe two days, as muc as on the ſabbath, even the preparing of neceſſary food, which he pe mits the five other days, forbidding only ſervile laborious works.

Secondly, In that the working on that day by the law is made puniſh able with death, which was not ſo before; which innovation, and ne rigour of the law, eſtabliſhed by God, was authoriſed by the puniſhin of him who had gathered ſticks on the ſabbath-day; whereas we fin that before the law was given upon mount *Sinai*, God did not comman thoſe *Jews* to be puniſhed with death, who went forth the ſeventh day t gather manna, according to their ancient cuſtom of dreſſing their me on that day.

Let me add this further, that though the Apoſtles had aboliſhed th rigour of the law concerning the ſabbath, introduced by *Moſes*, yet the themſelves obſerved it; which practice of theirs, in all probability, gav occaſion to the Chriſtians, for almoſt four centuries, to keep the ſabbat as well as the firſt day of the week, ſolemnizing both the days, the on as a commemoration of the creation of the world, and the other of th reſurrection of our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt.

But whatever judgment may be paſſed on this laſt remark, it is ver evident from *Geneſis* and *Exodus*,—firſt, that the law of the ſabbath wa obſerved before *Moſes*: ſecondly, that this obſervation was by the fir Patriarchs propagated among the heathens alſo, as well as the idea of th creation; or as the practice of ſacrificing, with the other parts of rel gious worſhip, the original whereof may be ſeen in the book of *Geneſi* as we ſhall make appear in our following diſcourſe.

After all this, we muſt conclude againſt the Atheiſt, that either *Moſ* muſt have imprudently laid a ſnare for himſelf, in forging a matter o fact of which not only the *Jews*, but all the world, were able to con vince him, ſince there were none amongſt them but muſt needs be con ſcious whether they had obſerved the ſabbath in commemoration of th creation, as he relates it, or no; or elſe, that the creation of the worl being a matter of fact ſo generally known, and the memorial of it ſo lemnized every ſeventh day by all thoſe who preceded him, muſt need be an unconteſted and immovable truth, which I ſhall farther evin

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hoſe obſervations which I ſhall raiſe from the dependence and con-ion which the matters related by *Moſes* in *Geneſis* have with the crea-, and the promiſe of the *Meſſiah*. This is my buſineſs at preſent; erforming of which I ſhall make it appear, that nothing can be ima-d more rational and coherent than the relations of *Moſes*, in which Atheiſts imagine that they diſcover ſo great abſurdities.

CHAP. VIII.

That ADAM *was convinced of his Creation, by Reaſon and Authority.*

HOUGH it might be thought more natural, in theſe our diſquiſitions about the hiſtory of *Geneſis*, to begin with thoſe mat-which happened near the time of *Moſes*, and from them to paſs to e at a greater diſtance; yet I have choſen rather to follow the thread *Moſes* his diſcourſe, hoping that this method will afford more light to e our Reflexions; at leaſt, it will ſpare me the trouble of frequent titions, which in the other way I ſhould be neceſſarily obliged to. I in then with this, *That* Adam *was convinced of his Creation, both by ſon and Authority.*

he creation of *Adam* being a thing of that nature, that he muſt firſt convinced of it himſelf, before he could perſuade his poſterity to en-ain the belief of it, it is worth our inquiry to know what ways he to aſſure himſelf that he was indeed created in that manner as *Moſes* tes. And, foraſmuch as the certainty of this tradition depends upon authority of *Adam*, whom *Moſes* ſuppoſes to have been the firſt deli-r of it, it is plain that we muſt be aſſured that *Adam* could not de-e himſelf in this matter, as it is evident enough that he would not ive his children, when he took care to inſtruct them concern-it.

As to his own exiſtence, he could not but be as ſtrongly perſuaded of s we are of ours, all the difficulty lying in the manner how he came xiſt. Now, there were two ways by which *Adam* might inform him-of this, viz. by reaſon, and the teſtimony of authority. He could y find out this ſecret by a rational reflexion; or, he might alſo be uaded of it by God himſelf, who had created him, not to mention any information which he might have from the angels who were neſſes of his creation.

t appears that *Adam*, whoſe tradition *Moſes* has recorded, ſuppoſes he had learnt of God himſelf the manner of his own formation. l ſpeaks to *Adam*, and ſanctifies the ſeventh day; that is, obliges *m* to keep the memorial of his creation; he ties him, by a law, to memorate his creation fifty-two times a year, and to render him tinual thanks for the being he had received.

But, foraſmuch as *Adam* was capable of making reflexions upon thoſe ral matters which God had made known to him concerning his

creation, I ſay, it cannot be imagined, but that he muſt have taken theſe things into conſideration, and have been convinced of the truth of them by the light of reaſon.

The truth of a relation conſiſting in its conformity with the matter related, it appears clearly that *Adam* could certainly know the truth of what God had declared to him, by examining the things themſelves.

We may diſtinguiſh ſeveral propoſitions in the revelation God made to him concerning the manner of his creation.

The firſt was, That his body was taken from the earth.

The next, That his ſoul was not framed before his body.

The third, That his ſoul had been joined to his body, to conſtitute one individual perſon.

The fourth, That he was created in a full and perfect age.

The fifth, That his wife was formed of a rib, taken out of his ſide, during the time that he was caſt into a deep ſleep.

Theſe are the truths I propoſe as inſtances, the rather becauſe there is not one of them of which *Adam* himſelf could be a witneſs.

And yet I affirm, there is none of theſe which he could not be aſſured of by the light of reaſon, being convinced of them by the ſame means which aſſured him of the exiſtence of his ſoul and body. The conſideration therefore of theſe two matters was of good uſe to confirm the revelation which God had vouchſafed him concerning his creation, of which he could not be a witneſs himſelf.

That his body was taken from the earth, *Adam* might eaſily infer from the food that maintained it; for what is the matter of man's nouriſhment, but a digeſted and diſguiſed earth? And finding himſelf, at firſt, in a perfect eſtate, it was natural for him to judge that his body had been thus at once framed of the earth, without paſſing thoſe ſeveral degrees of growth whereby children arrive to their juſt ſtature.

And he might as eaſily be aſſured, that his ſoul was not formed before his body. The ſoul is a being, conſcious of his own operations and thoughts; wherefore he needed only make this reflexion: *My ſoul has had neither knowledge nor thoughts before it was united to my body; therefore my ſoul did not exiſt before it.* No great ſtudy was required to make ſo natural a concluſion as this is.

Again, how could he be ignorant of the union of his ſoul with the body? Was it not obvious for him to be aſſured hereof, by the ready obedience which he ſaw his body yield unto his ſoul? He had the idea of a tree, as well as the idea of his foot or arm; whence it was eaſy for him to reflect thus: *How comes it to paſs, that I command my feet and my arms, and that I cannot do the ſame to a ſtone or tree, though I have the idea of the one as well as of the other?* Muſt not this proceed from a nearer union it hath with the one than with the other? He knew that this union continued during his ſleep, and was independent of his will. In a word, he had the ſame proofs of this union, which we have of it at preſent; only they were in him much more lively, becauſe our infancy makes us in ſome ſort ignorant of the nature of our ſouls, our ſouls accuſtoming themſelves, by little and little, to depend upon the ſenſes, ſo

as

not to be able to raiſe themſelves, without ſome trouble, above their erations.

Neither was it leſs evident to *Adam*, that he was produced at a perfect e. He ſaw that his food maintained life, and he knew aſſuredly that he d not taken any but very lately: how then could he attain to that ture without that help? Or how was it that he found himſelf now dy to faint, if he deferred to take it, which formerly he had not felt e want of? Theſe reflexions made it unqueſtionable to him that he s formed in a perfect age.

And laſtly, it was yet more eaſy for him to be perſuaded of the truth God's revelation concerning the forming of *Eve*: he needed but to unt his own ribs and thoſe of his wife; for he could not find one s in himſelf than in his wife, without being fully ſatisfied in that atter.

Theſe propoſitions, with many others of like nature, being ſuch as *dam* could be aſſured of the truth of, by making reflexion either on mſelf, or on plants, or living creatures, greatly confirming his belief the Divine teſtimony concerning his creation, we may eaſily infer, at *Adam* could not deceive himſelf about that matter.

CHAP. IX.

hat ADAM *was confirmed, by his own Experience, in the Perſuaſion he had entertained concerning his Creation.*

WHEN I take for granted that *Adam* could ſatisfy himſelf concerning the truth of God's revelation, by ſome natural and eaſy eflexions, I do not find how any can think ſtrange of this hypotheſis; xcept ſome, perchance, who might think that I make *Adam* too contemplative.

But if any will be pleaſed to make theſe following obſervations, they ill juſtify me, that I have attributed nothing to him but what agrees xactly with his character.

The firſt is, That *Adam* finding himſelf, immediately upon his creation, t his full and perfect age, he was void of thoſe prejudices which the gnorance and weakneſs of his infancy are the cauſe of; his mind was ot tainted with popular errors, which oft are ſo great a hindrance to he knowledge of truth: he had not yet received any ill impreſſion; and vhen afterwards he was ſo credulous as to give way to a temptation, his xperience proved a moſt powerful means to inform his reaſon, and withraw him from his error.

Beſides, we ſuppoſe here, that the Divine teſtimony which acquainted im with the particular circumſtances of his creation, was precedent to he reflexions *Adam* made, and indeed was the cauſe of them. If we ſupoſe ſome contryman, not capable of diſcovering of himſelf, all on a

ſudden, the manner how ſuch a thing came to paſs, yet this is certain, that his reaſon alone will be able to ſatisfy him whether the thing happened in that manner which the relation of it imports; he need but conſult the rules of probability, to be determined in this matter.

Adam had not only the advantage of being formed at a perfect age, of being acquainted, by the mouth of God himſelf, about the creation of the world, &c. and of living ſo many ages, which gave him leiſure enough to conſider the probability of what God had revealed to him, to examine the grounds and certainty of it, and, in a word, to judge whether the ſaid reflexions were to be rejected as fabulous, or to be relied on as of moſt certain and evident truth; but over and above all this, *Adam* could rationally aſſure himſelf of the manner how the things (which he had not ſeen) were done, by the experience he had of other matters which were comprehended in the Divine revelation.

The manner how his body had been formed of the earth, was, I confeſs, a thing difficult to be conceived; but the production of an infant like to himſelf, by the way of generation, which he afterwards was aſſured of by experience, was ſufficient to confirm his mind in the belief of the Divine revelation; the way of generation being at leaſt as much, if not more difficult to comprehend, as the manner of his creation.

We have great reaſon to ſuppoſe that, as it was *Adam*'s duty, ſo he did really make thoſe reflexions I have attributed to him, if we conſider that God gave him a law proportioned to the ſtate in which he was created; for this law ſuppoſes that *Adam* owned himſelf God's ſubject, that he conſidered God as his great benefactor, that he hoped for rewards from him, and feared to be puniſhed by him.

And laſtly, if I ſhould grant that theſe reflexions did not at firſt make ſo deep an impreſſion in his heart, yet at leaſt it cannot be denied, but that after his fall he was in a manner neceſſitated to meditate on theſe truths. God appeared to him in a viſible manner; God paſſed ſentence upon him, his wife, and the ſerpent; God condemned the ſerpent, and afforded his grace to man; God made him a promiſe proportioned to the evil into which he was fallen. The woman had deceived her huſband, which did naturally tend to diſunite them; but God uniting himſelf again with *Adam*, made the effect of his promiſe to depend upon *Adam*'s reunion with his wife, having aſſured him that the offſpring of his wife ſhould be his Redeemer. God threatened the woman with extreme pains in child-bearing; he drave them out of the garden of *Eden*, and placed a flame of fire to guard the entrance there.

All this, without doubt, would never ſuffer *Adam* ſlightly to paſs over matters of ſo great importance as his creation, and the manner of his being formed out of the earth. Things being thus ſtated, it is eaſy to judge whether we have ſuppoſed *Adam* too ſubtle and contemplative, by attributing the aforeſaid reflexions to him.

CHAP. X.

CHAP. X.

at the CHILDREN *of* ADAM *had reaſon to be convinced of the Creation.*

T is apparent, that as ſoon as the children of *Adam* were arrived to years of underſtanding, they were in a condition to make reflexions the manner of their production, according to the information re-ved of their parents. They were able to compare the twofold original man; the one, in which the body was immediately taken from the th; the other, in which it was produced by generation; and were able judge if either of them were improbable; and in particular, whether formation of their parents, with other matters conſequent, and de-nding on it, could be ſufficiently proved and confirmed.

For it was eaſy for them to judge, that their parents, of whoſe ten-neſs and care they had ſo great experience, could not have had the ſt deſign to deceive them in what they had delivered to them concern-the creation. They had alſo leiſure enough, during the long lives ey enjoyed, to examine the ſolidity of thoſe reaſons which perſuaded ir parents of the truth of their creation.

For inſtance, they could eaſily inform themſelves whether there were y more men and women than their father and mother, that had been fore them; whether they were produced from the earth, or by a for-tous concourſe of atoms; whether there were any other language be-es that which they ſpake; whether there were any ruins of buildings, other remains, which ſignified that arts had been formerly cultivated; d in a word, whether there were any reaſon to perſuade them, that world had not its beginning at the time which their parents aſſigned it.

Neither were they only in a condition to judge of the truth of theſe ngs: but their ſenſes were able to convince them of it; as, for inſtance, ſeeing the firſt trees, the production of others from them, and the ferent degrees of their growth.

But beſides all this, they could experience moſt of theſe things in their n perſons; they could know whether God had aſſigned to man the it of trees, and grain for their food, as *Moſes* has recorded, only by amining their own mouths, which were formed to chew fruits, and t to tear the raw fleſh of animals, which requires ſharper and ſtronger s of teeth than thoſe they found themſelves provided with, the eating fleſh not being introduced till after the deluge.

Thus, after the act of generation, they ſaw their children born, as it s repreſented to them that they themſelves had been formed.

They had alſo before their eyes ſenſible ſigns of the truth of the mat-s related to them: as, for inſtance, the continual miracle of a flame of , which kept them from entering into Paradiſe, was a certain argu-nt of the firſt ſin, of which they had not been eye-witneſſes.

The pains of a woman in child-bearing did the more confirm the truth of the Divine ſentence, becauſe it was not obvious for them to apprehend ſuch conſequences from an act which was pleaſing to their ſenſual appetites.

And laſtly, Foraſmuch as they kept a ſolemn day to celebrate the memory of the world's nativity, on which ſeventh day their parents repeated to them no leſs than two and fifty times a year the ſame thing, informing them of the manner of their formation; it is impoſſible to ſuppoſe that they ſhould let theſe things paſs without making any reflexion on the truth of them, and the rather becauſe we cannot rationally conceive that they ſhould have been ſerious in any duties of religion, without having firſt examined the truth of the creation, and of the promiſe of a Redeemer, which are the true grounds of all religious acts whatſoever.

CHAP. XI.

That the CHILDREN *of* ADAM *were actually convinced of the Truth of the Creation, and the Promiſe of the* MESSIAH.

I SUPPOSE it is ſufficiently evident that the immediate poſterity of *Adam* could eaſily be aſſured of the manner how their parents had been produced, from whom they derived their beings. They could likewiſe be fully ſatisfied about the truth of their ſin, and the promiſe God had made them, *That one of their poſterity ſhould deſtroy the enemy of mankind.*

My buſineſs therefore next, is to ſhew that they were actually aſſured of the truth of theſe matters: this will appear, if we conſider two things.

The firſt is, that as theſe matters were the chief objects of their meditation, becauſe of their extraordinary importance, ſo it is evident that they acted as perſons fully ſatisfied of the truth of them.

The other is, that as they had been inſtructed in theſe truths by their parents, ſo they delivered the ſame to their poſterity, to whom they tranſmitted the belief of theſe matters, as of things altogether unqueſtionable.

I ſay then, that they acted as thoſe who were fully aſſured of the truth of theſe matters, which appears throughout the whole courſe of their lives, not only when they did that which was good, but when they were overtaken with ſin: and this alone, methinks, is ſufficient to evidence the deep impreſſion the belief of the creation, and the promiſe of the *Meſſiah*, had made on their hearts.

Sacrifices are acts of religious worſhip; and this cuſtom therefore of ſacrificing, which we find amongſt the Children of *Adam*, was an evident mark of their piety; and this their religious inclination was, without doubt,

bt, the effect of their being perſuaded of the truth of the creation,
firſt promiſe.

The ſin of *Cain* in killing his brother, ſhews the ſame perſuaſion: the
vine oracle, *the ſeed of the woman ſhall bruiſe the ſerpent's head*, being
reſſed in very general terms, was applicable either to the firſt ſon of
, or to his poſterity; or elſe to ſome other who might be called her
, becauſe born from one of her poſterity.

t is natural for us to paſs from one meaning to another, when we are
ſearch for the true ſenſe of ſuch *general propoſitions* as theſe. Now it
ears, from the name which *Eve* gave to *Cain*, that ſhe took the words
his oracle in the firſt ſenſe, that is, ſhe looked upon *Cain* to be the ſon
t had been promiſed her, as appears from her own words. *I have*
ith ſhe) *gotten a man from the Lord* (*k*). And it cannot be doubted,
t being in this opinion herſelf, ſhe was not wanting to cheriſh and
tter this hope in her ſon, that he was to fulfil the firſt propheſy or Di-
e oracle: neither is it any whit ſtranger to ſuppoſe this, than to ima-
e that *Mandane* did inſtil into her ſon *Cyrus* aſpiring rthoughts ſo
empire of *Aſia*, from the dream of his father *Aſtyages*, which ſhe looked
on as a divine foreboding.

When we read therefore that *Cain* ſlew his brother, ſeeing him pre-
red of God by a very diſtinguiſhing mark in the act of their ſacrificing,
rough the jealouſy and hatred he had conceived againſt him, may we
t very naturally conclude from thence, that as he had never doubted
the truth of the promiſe, ſo he could not endure to ſee another come,
diſpute his pretenſions of being the fulfiller of that firſt oracle?

A like reflexion we may make upon the name which *Eve* gave to *Seth*;
d indeed the *Jews*, in their ancient commentaries on *Geneſis*, lead us
it: *She called his name* Seth, *for God* (ſaid ſhe) *has appointed me another*
d (*l*). *R. Tanchumah*, following the notion of *R. Samuel*, ſaith, That
e had regard to that ſeed which was to proceed from another, or a
ange place; and what ſeed is that? ſaith he. It is the King, the
ſſiah.

I pretend not to maintain the ſolidity of the reflexions they make upon
e words, *another ſeed*. They ſeem rather to have pleaſed themſelves
ſporting with a word which admits of both ſignifications, *other* and
ange, then to give us an exact and diſtinct notion of the importance of
at word. Thus much, at leaſt, we cannot deny, but that *Eve* conſi-
ring her ſon *Seth* as him whom God has given her inſtead of *Abel*, ſhe
uld do no leſs than acquaint him with her hopes; and indeed, this
formation was that which not only diſpoſed *Seth* and his poſterity for
ety and the ſpirit of religion, but did alſo in a particular manner incline
em to ſeparate from the race of *Cain*, as from thoſe whom God had
reft of the right of fulfilling the firſt oracle, to which naturally they
ight pretend.

It appears from the example of *Enoch*, that the children of *Adam* lived
the exerciſe of religious worſhip: and we know that the ſaid worſhip
ppoſeth the creation of the world, and promiſe of the *Meſſiah*, and that
l the acts of religion are employed either in commemorating theſe truths

(*k*) Gen. iv. 1.
(*l*) *Rabboth*, fol. 27. col. 2. par. 23. & *alibi*.

every ſeventh day, or in unfolding the wonders therein contained, or in teſtifying our thankfulneſs to God for the ſame.

We may add here, that the inſtance of *Lamech's polygamy* does in ſome ſort make out to us the force of this perſuaſion.

Cain being rejected by God, and diſtinguiſhed by an exemplary puniſhment, for killing his brother *Abel*, it is evident that no man could any longer interpret that promiſe in the firſt ſenſe, by applying it to *Adam's* firſt ſon, or his poſterity. This being ſo plain, as none could be ignorant of it, it was therefore natural to ſeek for another meaning of that promiſe, and to place the fulfilling of it in a poſterity at a greater diſtance, or more numerous.

And indeed ſo it happened; for the exemplary puniſhment which God inflicted on *Cain* during the ſeven firſt generations, according to thoſe words, That *he ſhould be puniſhed ſevenfold*, made his poſterity apprehend, that God (for the ſin he had committed) had juſtly debarred him of the right he might otherwiſe have had of fulfilling the promiſe.

But yet at the ſame time they conceived alſo, that this right, which belonged more properly to the eldeſt or firſt-born than to the younger brothers, was now to return to his poſterity after the ſeventh generation; and in this view it ſeems, that *Lamech* affected polygamy, as if by multiplying his poſterity he had hoped to ſee that promiſe fulfilled by ſome one or other of them.

It cannot be denied but that he imitated the crimes of *Cain*, and therefore may well be ſuppoſed to have been leavened alſo with his falſe maxims. But how greatly ſoever he was corrupted, yet foraſmuch as he had been educated in the hopes of his father, and in converſe with the family of *Seth*, who many ages before had formed public aſſemblies for religious exerciſes, we cannot well imagine but that he muſt have had the ſame pretenſions.

It appears therefore that the polygamy of *Lamech* may juſtly be eſteemed an effect of his miſapprehenſions concerning the ſenſe of the firſt promiſe; thoſe means which he conceived moſt likely, he made choice of, to give him a ſhare in the fulfilling of that promiſe which pointed at a ſon to be born. So that the irregularity he was guilty of in marrying two wives at the ſame time, may paſs for a proof of his being perſuaded not only of the promiſe, *That the ſeed of the woman ſhould break the ſerpent's head*, but alſo of the creation of the world.

It ſeems that, according to theſe principles, we may give a very plauſible account, as well of thoſe violences which were exerciſed in the old world, and of their ſtrong inclinations to ſenſuality, as of thoſe alliances between the family of *Seth* and that of *Cain*, which did not happen till ſeven generations after *Cain*; that is to ſay, at a time when the family of *Cain* pretended to be reſtored again to his ancient right, from which he had been ſuſpended during ſeven generations: the family of *Seth*, by theſe alliances with the family of *Cain*, ſeeming deſirous to ſecure their hopes and pretenſions. It will not be thought ſtrange that I look upon the jealouſy of *Cain* towards his brother (as thinking himſelf ſupplanted by him of his right to accompliſh the promiſe), and the polygamy of *Lamech*, as an effect of this perſuaſion, if it be conſidered, that in all likelihood

this

belief was more ſtrong at the beginning of the world, the idea of romiſe being more freſh and lively in the minds of men, as a thing great diſtance from thoſe times; and that we find in the holy family eneral, manifold inſtances of this ſpirit of jealouſy, and burning of a poſterity.

e find alſo, much about the ſame time, another *Lamech*, the father *Noah* (*m*), declaring by the name he gave his ſon, the hopes he had ne might probably be the perſon who was to comfort mankind con- ng all the miſery ſin had brought into the world.

nus it appears clearly, that for above ſixteen ages, from the creation e world to the deluge, we find in all the actions of the children of a ſtrong impreſſion of the belief of the creation of the world, and romiſe of the *Meſſiah*; and till this time we find not the leaſt in- e which might ſeem to convince the relation of *Moſes* of the leaſt dity. We ſee men acting from the perſuaſion of theſe two matters ct; we muſt conclude therefore, that they were diſtinctly informed em: yea, we ſee all men in general acting according to this per- on; it is evident therefore they were known to all; and the weekly vance of the ſabbath-day continually repreſenting the truths to yes and minds of all, takes away all poſſibility of forgery in theſe cts.

et us now inquire whether after the deluge theſe ideas were effaced; whether they have not exerted the ſame efficacy in the ſpirit of *Noah*, the actions of all his poſterity.

CHAP. XII.

NOAH *was fully perſuaded of the Creation of the World, and the Promiſe of the* MESSIAH.

we find that the children of *Adam*, and their poſterity, could be xactly informed of the creation, and the promiſe of the *Meſſiah*, and indeed they were ſo, it will follow, that *Noah* could not be unac- nted with the ſame truths.

oah was ſix hundred years old when the deluge came: he had con- d with *Lamech* his father, who had ſeen *Adam* and his children, as fifty-ſix years of age when *Adam* died; he had converſed with *uſalem* his grandfather, who died that very year the flood came, and being three hundred and forty-three years old when *Adam* died, without doubt inſtructed *Noah* during ſo vaſt an interval of time, in manner as himſelf had been inſtructed by *Adam* for many ages.

nd as *Methuſalem* had lived a long time with *Seth*, who died in the of the world 1042, ſo it is evident that *Noah*, who was born in the year

(*m*) Gen. v. 29.

year 1056, had not only ſeen *Lamech* and *Methuſalem*, but many alſo their anceſtors, whoſe diſcourſes he heard, examined their tradition and imitated their way of worſhip.

Moreover, *Noah* ſaw that there were no men in his time who did n deduce their genealogy from *Adam:* all his contemporaries could co vince him of it, every one of them having as exact a knowledge their anceſtors as he could have of his.

Now, that this was a matter which they might be eaſily aſſured o appears on theſe two accounts: the one is, the long life which the m of that age enjoyed; and the other, the ſhort interval of time which w between the creation and the deluge, the whole amounting only to 16 years. *Adam* died in the year 930, and the deluge happened in the 6 year of *Noah*'s life. *Adam* died 126 years before the birth of *Noah*; as *Adam* muſt have been ſeen and known by *Methuſalem*, *Lamech*, a thouſands of others who were contemporaries with *Noah*.

To theſe we may add a third remark, and that is, the jealouſy a hatred which was between the two families of *Cain* and *Seth*: *Cain* poſterity were altogether corrupted, and the greateſt part of *Seth*'s al *Noah*, being of the poſterity of *Seth*, had no reaſon to call thoſe matte in queſtion, which he ſaw generally owned and received of thoſe to who their wickedneſs and crimes ſuggeſted objections againſt them. And I d not know, whether I might not ſuppoſe that *Noah* had before his ey Paradiſe, with the cherubims who guarded the entrance thereof, and ma it inacceſſible; which, if ſo, was an authentic proof of the truths in queſ tion; that garden, as far as we can judge, being not deſtroyed, nor th guardian angel diſcharged, till the time of the flood.

Be it as it will, yet *Noah*, being a man fearing God, was honoure with an extraordinary call to exhort men to repentance; he was com manded to build an ark; he ſaw the deluge happening, according to wh God had foretold; he ſaw the beaſts, of their own accord, gather them ſelves together, to enter into the ark, in like manner as he had been to that they came to *Adam*; he ſaw the deluge ceaſe, according to the D vine declaration; he ſaw fire from heaven conſuming the ſacrifice h offered in acknowledgment to God, in like manner as the words *Moſes* ſeem to imply that it happened at the ſacrifice of *Abel*; he ſa himſelf choſen in a peculiar manner to be the depoſitary of the promi which *Adam* had left to his poſterity, though he never had the ſatisfactio of ſeeing it fulfilled himſelf, God having reſerved the accompliſhment it for another time, and to one of his poſterity at a great diſtance.

It is very evident that all theſe particulars could not but conduce preſerve the memory of theſe firſt moſt important matters of fact of th creation and the promiſe of the *Meſſiah*; and therefore, that *Noah* mu of neceſſity be convinced of the certainty and truth of them. Let us no ſee whether *Noah*'s offſpring had the ſame perſuaſion concerning the things.

CHAP. XI

CHAP. XIII.

the Children of NOAH *were convinced of the Truth of theſe Matters.*

HE children of *Noah* were an hundred years old when the deluge happened, and conſequently had converſed a long ſpace of time *Methuſalem*, and many other of their anceſtors and relations of the world, and had frequented the religious aſſemblies, obſerved every ath-day in the family of *Seth*, whence they were deſcended, and had inſtructed there by thoſe who had ſeen *Adam* and his poſterity: it ident therefore, beyond all conteſt, that they could not be ignorant e creation, and promiſe of the *Meſſiah*.

ow, that they had a diſtinct knowledge of thoſe matters, we may ntly conclude, not only becauſe they had ſeen God, when he bleſſed , and a ſecond time ſaid to them, as after a new creation, *Increaſe ultiply* (*n*); nor only upon the account of his giving them a poſitive forbidding them to eat the blood of living creatures (*o*), whoſe they were permitted to feed on, as he had forbid *Adam* to eat of fruit of the tree in the midſt of the garden, when he left the reſt to free uſe: not only for that he had given the rainbow, as a new of his covenant with mankind; nor only becauſe they had practiſed e acts of religion to which they had been educated by their parents anceſtors before the deluge: but becauſe the ſame may be inferred that action which drew upon *Cham* his father's curſe.

What is the meaning of *Cham*'s deriding the nakedneſs of his father, of his father's taking occaſion from thence to curſe him ſo ſolemnly, that in the perſon of *Canaan* his firſt-born? If it were only a piece reverence in the father, what reaſon had *Noah* to curſe the ſon on account? Or was it (as ſome have ſuppoſed) that *Canaan* had n occaſion firſt to his father's irreverence, by acquainting him with diſorder in which he had found his grandfather *Noah*? Without ot, there is ſomething more than ordinary in this hiſtory. Sure it is, the account given us of *Cham* repreſents him as a profane perſon, deeply tinctured with the maxims of *Cain* and his poſterity, and ſeems int to us, that he ſuppoſing the promiſe of the *Meſſiah* either fruſtrated he death of *Abel*, or altogether falſe, he made his father's nakedneſs ſubject of his mockery; who ſeemed to be incapable of begetting any e children, and therefore incapable of contributing to the accompliſh- t of the promiſe of the *Meſſiah*, in hopes of which he accounted ſelf ſo happy that he had eſcaped the deluge.

What means it alſo, that *Noah* pronounced ſo terrible a curſe againſt poſterity of *Cham* by *Canaan*, who were ſo far from giving an accom- nment to that promiſe, that they were in a manner wholly extermi- ed by *Joſhua*, when God put the poſterity of *Shem* by *Abraham* in eſſion of the land of *Canaan*? It is very natural for us to conceive, that

(*n*) Gen. ix. 1. (*o*) Gen. ix. 5.

that *Noah* conſidered his ſon *Cham*'s deriding of him, not only as co trary to the reſpect which was due to him as his father, but alſo as t effect of a horrid impiety, which attacked God himſelf, as making th promiſe, *The ſeed of the woman ſhall bruiſe the ſerpent's head*, a ſubject raillery.

This reflexion upon the action of *Cham*, and the curſe of *Noah* co ſequent to it, does appear very natural, if we conſider that *Noah* cou not but reflect upon the name his father had given him, and the ſpeci favour ſhewed to him, in being alone preſerved of all the poſterity *Adam*, and conſequently the only perſon in the world by whom th promiſe was to be fulfilled. At leaſt, it cannot be denied, but that th reflexion is as natural as it would have been juſt, in reference to the fa of cruel *Aſtyages* (*p*), if, when he had (as he thought) ſufficiently elud his dream, which preſaged the glory of the ſon of *Mandane* his daughte he had found her indecently uncovered, and had taken thence occaſio deridingly to reflect, with his other children, upon a dream which ſeeme to promiſe to the ſon of *Mandane* the throne of all *Aſia*, and threate the ruin of his own.

It is a thing worth our noting, that in the time of *Ezra* (*q*) the *Sa maritans* had ſo freſh a memory of *Cham*'s ſin, which they ſuppoſed to b generally preſerved amongſt other nations, that in their letter to kin *Artaxerxes* againſt the *Jews* who rebuilt *Jeruſalem*, they declare, tha would not diſcover the king's nakedneſs; implying, that they could no conſent to the injury he might receive from the *Jews* in ſuffering *Jeru ſalem* to be rebuilt. It is not needful to repeat thoſe other argument which prove that the chidren of *Noah* had reaſon to be, and were ac tually as much convinced of the creation and firſt promiſe as their an ceſtors were; for, ſeeing that theſe arguments were the very ſame whic their fathers had to perſuade themſelves of the truth of theſe things, w had better proceed to the inquiry, whether their poſterity that followe them, had the ſame perſuaſion they had? which may eaſily be proved in making ſome reflexions on the following ages, and upon thoſe wh deſcended from *Noah* and his children.

CHAP. XIV.

That the Poſterity of NOAH*'s Children were perſuaded of the Truth of th Creation, and firſt Promiſe.*

IF *Noah* ſaw *Methuſalem*, who had ſeen *Adam* and his poſterity be fore the deluge; *Abraham* ſaw *Shem* and his children, who were unqueſtionable witneſſes of what had paſſed before and ſince the flood.

Noah

(*p*) *Herod*, lib. 1. *Juſtin Hiſt.* lib. 1. *Valer. Max.* lib. 1.
(*q*) *Ezra* iv. 14.

h dying 350 years after the deluge, it appears that his death hap-
in the year of the world 2006; ſo that *Noah* died only two years
the birth of *Abraham*, he being born in the year 2008.
aham lived 150 years with *Shem*, who died in the year 2158, and
rs with *Arphaxad* the ſon of *Shem*, who died in the year 2096; he
18 years with *Selah* ſon of *Arphaxad*, who died in the year 2126,
79 years with *Heber* the ſon of *Selah*, who died in the year

r being born in the year 2108, might ſee *Shem*, *Selah*, and *Heber*,
or ſome hundreds of years had converſed with *Noah* and his other
en; I ſay, we may ſuppoſe him to have converſed with thoſe patri-
or at leaſt with thoſe who, being their contemporaries, diſcourſed
ah as a man but of yeſterday, and from his relation and his chil-
were informed of the creation of *Adam*, his fall, the promiſe of
y ſeed, the death of *Abel*, the miracle of Paradiſe, the preaching
ah, the deluge, &c. and who, in obedience to the law of God,
ed by their anceſtors, did meet together fifty-two times every year,
ebrate the memorial of theſe wonders, and to teach them to their
ty.

may take notice of three things here which conduce much to the
vation of a diſtinct knowledge of theſe matters.

e firſt is, That the ark itſelf might be ſeen by all the world, as a
monument of the deluge, and the ſaving of *Noah* and his ſons (*r*).
monument continued very many ages after *Abraham*, and was a
to preſerve the memory of the deluge amongſt the *Pagans*, as *Lu-*
o name no more, acquaints us.

e ſecond is, That it was as eaſy for any of *Abraham*'s contem-
es, as for *Abraham*, to deduce his genealogy from *Noah* and his
en.

l this was the more eaſy, becauſe the firſt diviſion of the world
the three ſons of *Noah*, was followed by another partition amongſt
oſterity, in the year of the world 1758; a diviſion which gave
juſt title of poſſeſſion to that part of the earth where they were
; in defence of which, it ſeems probable that the war of *Chedo-*
(mentioned the xiiith of *Geneſis*) was undertaken, the family of
having invaded the land of *Canaan*, which was part of the inhe-
e of *Shem*, as we ſhall make appear elſewhere.

e third and laſt thing is, That it was not eaſy to impoſe a forgery
hoſe times, becauſe their lives were yet of a great extent, though
r to thoſe who lived before the flood.

theſe we may add this further conſideration, that as the jealouſy
was between the family of *Seth* and *Cain* was a great means to
e inviolably the important truths of the creation and firſt promiſe;
jealouſy now being riſen amongſt the ſons of *Noah*, *Cham* being
ed of his own father in the perſon of *Canaan*, and the ſame being
ated to their poſterity, it could not but effectually contribute to
theſe important truths from oblivion, and particularly the promiſe
Meſſiah, conceived in theſe words, *The ſeed of the woman ſhall bruiſe*
ent's head.

In

(*r*) *De Dea Syra*, p. 1060.

In a word, we may not only, in reference to the matter in hand, t notice of what *Lucian* relates concerning the religion of the *Aſſyrians* which did ſo lively preſerve the memory of the deluge, and of what done to *Noah* by his ſon *Cham*, when he ſcoffed at the nakedneſs of father (*t*); but alſo, that the God of the *Sichemites* was called *Baalber* whoſe ſymbol was the figure of the privy parts of a man, which ſeem manifeſt alluſion to their deſcent from the family of *Cham*, the *Sichem* being ſome of the poſterity of *Canaan*.

It is alſo very natural to conceive, firſt of all, that it was from th old pretenſions that the *Canaanites* took occaſion to profane the m holy things with ſuch ſhameful ideas.

Secondly, That it was in deteſtation of theſe ideas, that God orde the killing of the prieſts of *Baal*. And,

Thirdly, That it was for the ſame reaſon, that the *Jews* were co manded to deſtroy them utterly.

Fourthly, This was alſo the reaſon why the *Iſraelites* were ſo often firous of imitating their crimes.

In the fifth place, as we ſee that upon the like account the *Moab* and *Ammonites* took *Chemoſh* for their god, and that the women of th nations were very zealous to propagate their religion, of which we h an inſtance in *Jezabel*, the wife of *Ahab*, ſo God was alſo willing to ſpire his people with horror and deteſtation for their religion or any liance with them.

Laſtly, as there does appear a very great conformity and reſemblan between the firſt birth of the world from the firſt chaos, and its be born again after the deluge; between *Adam* the firſt man, and *Noah* ſecond; and between the jealouſies ſprung up in both their families up the account of the promiſe of the *Meſſiah*; ſo this conformity could but very naturally contribute to preſerve the memory of thoſe anci events which *Noah* and his children had delivered to their poſterity w all the care which is taken to preſerve the tradition of the fundamen of religion.

CHAP. XV.

That we find the Family of Abraham, *and his Poſterity till* Jacob, *f perſuaded of thoſe Truths.*

IT is no leſs eaſy to conceive how the diſtinct knowledge of th truths was in proceſs of time handed down to *Jacob* and his p terity. This I ſhall briefly explain.

I u

(*s*) Judg. viii. 23. & ix. 8. *Talm. Hier.* fol. 11. col. 4. & *gloſſ. in* & *Avodazara*, c. iii. fol. 43. col. 1.

(*t*) *De Dea Syr.* p. 1069.

ed not take notice here, that the religion practiſed by *Abraham*
s poſterity, ſuppoſe thoſe matters as conſtantly owned and known.
annot be denied, but that *Lot*, having followed *Terah* and *Abraham*
God called the latter out of *Chaldea*, might thence ſuppoſe, that
avenly call did ſeparate and diſtinguiſh him from the reſt of the
ty of *Shem*, and gave him a right, as well as *Abraham*, to pretend
privilege of fulfilling the promiſe of the *Meſſiah*, or at leaſt to ſee
lled in his poſterity. This we may infer from the inceſt of *Lot*'s
ters: their crime, which in another view appears very monſtrous,
learly prove, that they were ſtrongly poſſeſſed with this hope, which
ather had raiſed in them.

now that ſome interpreters ſuppoſe (*u*), that they were moved to
it this inceſt from a pious intention of preſerving mankind, as ima-
; to themſelves, that as the deluge had drowned all men, beſides
nd his family, ſo the flames which deſtroyed *Sodom* had conſumed
nkind; which they were the more ready to believe, becauſe they
have heard from their father, that the world one day was to periſh
e. But indeed it may be conſidered as proceeding from a very dif-
motive, the *Jewiſh* doctors (*x*) plainly averring, that this was done
m in hopes of bringing forth the promiſed Redeemer.

d if we look upon this action of theirs in this view, with reference
promiſe of the *Meſſiah*, which was the grand object of the hopes of
oſe that feared God; it is natural to conceive, that conſidering
father as one whom God had peculiarly choſen from among the
ity of *Shem*, to execute the promiſe of the *Meſſiah*, and ſeeing that
mother was changed into a ſtatue of ſalt, they conceived themſelves
ne ſort authoriſed to ſurpriſe their father in that manner; and the
, becauſe they conceived on the one hand, that none of the *Ca-*
es (upon whom God had now begun to pour forth ſo hideous a
ance, as a beginning of the execution of the curſe againſt *Cham*)
g any part in this chiefeſt of bleſſings, could ever marry them, after
God had ſo manifeſtly ſeparated and called forth their father from
gſt them; and on the other hand, ſuppoſing that God would diſ-
with the irregularity of this action, by reaſon of their being re-
to an extremity.

ere be three circumſtances which greatly confirm this my remark
the motive of their inceſt.

e firſt is, That they are repreſented to us as thoſe who had behaved
ſelves very chaſtely, in the midſt of the impurities of *Sodom*; and
beſides we find they deſigned no ſuch thing, till after the death of
mother.

e other is, That we ſee them contriving the thing together, and
n a matter which naturally is apt to ſeparate the greateſt friends,
the motive proceeds from a ſpirit of uncleanneſs; nor indeed do
ıd that they continued in this inceſt.

e third is, That they were ſo far from being aſhamed of an action
elf ſo criminal, or concealing the knowledge of it from poſterity,
hey gave thoſe names to the children born of this their inceſt, that
might

(*u*) *Lyra* in Geneſ. xix. (*x*) *Beriſ. Rab.* part 23.

might perpetuate and divulge the memory of this their action, the o
calling her ſon *Moab*, as much as to ſay, *born of my father*, and the oth
her's *Benammi*, a name of a like ſignification with the former.

This obſervation is very neceſſary, becauſe theſe two ſons became t
heads of two great people, the *Moabites* and the *Ammonites*, whoſe kin
doms laſted above 1300 years, and lived on the borders of the holy lan
and were jealous of *Abraham* and his poſterity, as pretending that *Abr*
ham could not be choſen before *Lot* their father, who, being the ſon
Abraham's eldeſt brother, was to be conſidered as the firſt-born of *Tera*
and who were apt, without doubt, to take it for granted, that if G
had brought *Abraham* out of *Chaldea*, and reſcued him from *Ur*, he h
in a more peculiar manner ſaved *Lot* alone from the conflagration
Sodom, by the miniſtry of angels; and that *Abraham* and *Lot* being equal
deſcended from *Terah*, the right of accompliſhing the promiſe did equal
belong to them.

And indeed we find that in all ſucceeding times theſe thoughts d
predominate with them, as may eaſily be made out from the hiſtory
Balaam.

We ſee therefore, that the *Moabites*, who were deſcended from the elde
daughter of *Lot*, looked upon the pretenſions of the *Iſraelites*, that th
Meſſiah was to be born of their ſeed, in excluſion to all others, with gre
impatience; and it was for this reaſon that they ſent for *Balaam*, to de
cide (by Divine authority) the difference between them, concerning th
right or the promiſed bleſſing.

We may make very near the ſame reflexions upon the calling of *Ru*
the *Moabiteſs*, when ſhe ſaith to *Naomi* her mother-in-law, *Thy God ſha*
be my God, and thy people ſhall be my people; which ſignifies a renouncin
of the pretenſions of her own people, and an acquieſcing in the juſtice
thoſe of the *Iſraelites*; and it was upon this occaſion, that *Ruth* is mor
particularly taken notice of in the genealogy of our Saviour, as I ſha
have occaſion to ſhew hereafter.

That which I have hinted concerning the intention and aim of th
daughters of *Lot*, hath been obſerved before by the *Jewiſh* Rabbins, a
we may ſee in the moſt ancient of their Commentaries upon theſe word
of *Geneſis*, chap. xix. v. 32. *Come, let us make our father drink win*
&c. Upon which words, *R. Tanchumah*, following the footſteps
R. Samuel, makes this reflexion: *That we may preſerve ſeed of our father*;
is not ſaid, that we may preſerve a ſon from our father, but that we ma
renew the poſterity of our father, *becauſe* (ſaith he) *they had regard to th*
ſeed which was to proceed from a ſtrange place; and what ſeed is that? It
the King Meſſiah.

After this obſervation upon this action of *Lot*'s daughters, it can n
longer rationally be doubted, but that the violent paſſion which *Sara*
had for a ſon, proceeded from the very ſame impreſſion which made he
contrary to the inclinations of that ſex, to deliver her ſervant int
her huſband's boſom, eſpecially if we join to this the particular pro
miſe God had made to *Abraham*, which ſhe could not be ignora
of.

Sarah ſees herſelf deſtitute of children; and her barrenneſs having con
tinued ſo long a time, ſhe had no hopes of ever being a mother: wha

ined therefore for her, but to think of adopting a ſon of her bond-
an? And in conſideration of this, ſhe perſuades her huſband, who
no inclination to any ſuch thing by any thing that appears (at leaſt
edent to this deſire of his wife), to take her unto him. *He ſought the*
of God, that is, the ſeed which God had promiſed, as *Malachi* ex-
es it, *Mal.* ii. 15.
t leaſt it is certain, that the *Jews* have taken theſe words of *Ma-*
(*x*) in this ſenſe for a very long time, as they do ſtill to this

Ve may eaſily perceive, that this was a predominant impreſſion
ughout that whole family, if, to what we have already obſerved of
s daughters and of *Sarah*, we do but add the ſorrow *Rebecca* conceived
uſe of her barrenneſs, and the contentions happening between
wives of *Jacob* for their huſband's company; without which ſup-
l, the relation of ſuch a matter would be a thing of no import-
.
Certainly, as it would be ridiculous to ſuppoſe that ſo wiſe an hiſto-
as *Moſes* was, ſhould ſtoop to the recital of ſuch mean and low par-
lars (not to ſpeak worſe of them) without aiming at ſomething very
and conſiderable, ſo it is rational to believe that in all theſe rela-
s he pointed at the promiſe of the *Meſſiah*, which at that time was
great object of the religion of the faithful, which God in proceſs of
did explain by little and little more diſtinctly.
The jealouſy alſo which aroſe between *Iſhmael* and *Iſaac*, is no leſs
ſiderable. *Iſhmael* was the eldeſt ſon of *Abraham*, and circumciſed as
as *Iſaac*; he was ſaved from death by the miniſtry of an angel; and
the head of a great people, who from that time to this very day
e always been circumciſed.
may be alſo of great uſe to take notice here, that *Iſhmael* could not
be inſtructed by *Abraham* concerning the promiſe God had made to
, to which he pretended, as being the elder, and therefore mocked
ne great ſtir was made at the weaning of *Iſaac*, as thinking that he,
g the eldeſt, could not be deprived of the natural right of his pri-
geniture. At leaſt, it is very probable, that except it had been thus,
ah's anger (approved by God himſelf) would not have proved ſo vio-
, as well againſt *Iſhmael* as *Hagar*, who flattered him in theſe preten-
s, nor would *Abraham* ſo far have complied with it.
nd foraſmuch as *Iſaac*, on the other ſide, was born to fulfil a parti-
r promiſe, was circumciſed, and ſaved from death by an angel; and
, beſides all this, *Iſhmael* and he had been equally educated in the prac-
of religion; it is impoſſible but that this conformity of events (which
been the cauſe of ſuch laſting conteſts between them and their poſ-
y) muſt have engaged them to inquire into the truth of the creation,
the promiſe of the *Meſſiah*, and into all other matters which did any
concern them.
Ve have a like inſtance, if not ſtronger for our purpoſe, in *Eſau* and
b, who were both born of the ſame mother; but *Eſau* being the
-born, we find the ſame jealouſy ariſing between them, as before
between

(*x*) *Targ. Jonath.* in h. l. & *Kimchi* in h. l.

between *Iſhmael* and *Iſaac*. *Sarah* ſeemed ſomewhat cruel in caſting out her adopted ſon *Iſhmael*; and here we ſee that *Rebecca* preferred *Jacob* before *Eſau* her firſt-born, and aſſiſted him in robbing his elder brother of the bleſſing due to him of right: but without queſtion, her deſign in all this was to entail this bleſſing on her family, by making it fall on *Jacob*, as being afraid (and that not without cauſe) that *Eſau*, by his ſins and his marriage with the *Canaanites*, had made himſelf incapable thereof.

Now as this was the occaſion of a great diſpute between theſe two Patriarchs educated in the ſame belief and religion, ſo it plainly ſhews us how ſtrong a perſuaſion they had of the creation, and the promiſe of the *Meſſiah*.

And beſides, it is further very remarkable,

Firſt, That *Moſes* repreſents *Eſau* as a profane perſon; for which, not only this reaſon may be alledged, that he ſold his birth-right for a meſs of pottage, to which birth-right the prieſthood was always annexed; but we muſt further take notice,

That he being educated by his father in the hopes of this bleſſing, he ſeemed to laugh at it in all his actions; for firſt he married the daughter of *Heth*, by which he ſufficiently intimated that he neither minded the bleſſing nor the curſe of God; for *Canaan* and his poſterity had in a very ſolemn manner been curſed by *Noah*, with a particular regard to the promiſe of the *Meſſiah*, as I hinted before.

In the ſecond place, he married a daughter of *Iſhmael*, as if he intended to renew the pretenſions of *Iſhmael* againſt *Iſaac* his father.

In the third place we ſee, that when he repented of this profane humour, he was pierced with extreme ſorrow for the crime he had committed, becauſe he could not obtain pardon for it.

This jealouſy and difference between *Eſau* and *Jacob*, is the more conſiderable, becauſe *Eſau* was the head of a great nation, viz. the *Edomites*, a people circumciſed as well as the *Jews*, jealous of the poſterity of *Jacob*, and living upon the borders of *Judea*, as well as the *Moabites*, *Ammonites*, and *Iſhmaelites*, but yet put by their hopes by that oracle, *The greater people ſhall ſerve the leſſer*.

Were it needful to afford a greater light to theſe reflexions, I might here add a very natural one, from the oath which *Abraham* made his ſervant *Eliezer* take, when he ſent him to *Padan-Aram*, to procure a wife for *Iſaac*. We may eaſily judge that he was not willing he ſhould marry a *Canaanite*, as *Lot* had done; and that, for fear of forfeiting his hopes, and weakening the juſt pretentions of *Iſaac* to the right of accompliſhing the promiſe, from whence the *Canaanites* were excluded by the prophecy delivered by *Noah*. But that which made *Abraham* to oblige his ſervant to ſwear, putting his hand under his thigh; that is, touching that part which was the ſubject of circumciſion (*y*), and which bore the mark of the covenant; deſerves a further conſideration.

We find firſt of all, that the Patriarch *Jacob* obſerves the ſame cuſtom, when he made his ſon *Joſeph* to take an oath, that he ſhould not bury him in *Egypt*.

Secondly, We find that this cuſtom of beholding that member which received

(*y*) St. *Jerom*.

received circumciſion, as a part conſecrated to religion, did by little and little take place in the land of *Canaan*, and gave occaſion to the worſhip of *Baal Peor*, ſo famous among the *Moabites* and *Ammonites*; a very ſurpriſing and ſtrange worſhip indeed, and yet celebrated with feſtivals and hymns, and was the riſe of that worſhip which the heathens afterwards gave to *Priapus*. What I have here obſerved, hath been in part acknowledged by the *Jews*, where they ſpeak of the worſhip of *Baal Peor*, and the reaſon which made God preſcribe to the prieſt the uſe of linen drawers, that their nakedneſs might not appear during the functions of their miniſtry.

After all that I have now ſaid, concerning thoſe jealouſies which *Moſes* relates with ſo much care, it ſeems that the ſolidity of theſe obſervations cannot be diſputed; eſpecially if we conſider, that it is theſe jealouſies, and theſe pretenſions to the promiſe of the *Meſſiah*, that gave riſe to the cuſtom of calling God, the God of *Abraham*, the God of *Iſaac*, and the God of *Jacob*: for though he might as well have been called the God of *Adam*, the God of *Enoch*, and the God of *Noah*, foraſmuch as all theſe Patriarchs were alſo depoſitaries of the promiſe of the *Meſſiah*; yet it is probable that God was called ſo, becauſe of the particular promiſes which had been made, firſt to *Abraham*, ſecondly to *Iſaac*, and laſtly to *Jacob*, and in oppoſition to the pretenſions of ſome people near neighbours to the *Iſraelites*, and jealous of their hopes: the God of *Abraham*, and not of *Lot*, as the *Ammonites* and *Moabites*, *Lot*'s poſterity, pretended; the God of *Iſaac*, and not of *Iſhmael*, as the *Iſhmaelites* pretended; the God of *Jacob*, and not of *Eſau*, as the *Edomites*, who were the offspring of *Eſau*, pretended.

CHAP. XVII.

That this very Perſuaſion ſeems to have been kept up amongſt the Poſterity of JACOB; *until* MOSES's *Time.*

IT is yet eaſier to ſhew, that the diſtinct knowledge of the creation, and of the promiſe of the *Meſſiah*, did continue from *Jacob* to *Joſeph*, and ſo on to *Moſes*.

The following arguments will clearly demonſtrate it.

Firſt of all, we ſee that *Jacob* (z) being poſſeſſed of the bleſſing, and ſo depoſitary of the promiſe, obeyed *Iſaac*'s command, who forbad him to take a wife, but out of his own family; and that accordingly he went to *Padan-Aram*, to ſeek and get a wife amongſt thoſe of his kindred, as *Abraham* had formerly ſent for one of the ſame country for his ſon *Iſaac*.

We ſee, in the ſecond place, this Patriarch imitated *Lamech* (a) in ſome reſpect, by his falling into polygamy: for who can doubt but he who was conſcious to himſelf of having ſurpriſed, as he thought, the bleſſing

(z) Geneſ. xxviii. (a) Geneſ. xxix.

deſigned for his elder brother, did act in this occaſion by the ſame principle which *Lamech* had formerly acted by? Thus we ſee that barren *Rachel* follows *Sarah*'s example, and adopts the ſon of that maid-ſervant whom ſhe gave to *Jacob*; wherein *Leah* followed her, and gave one of her maids to her huſband: all this was evidently grounded upon the ſame principle which afterwards bred thoſe diſſenſions betwixt *Jacob*'s wives about the getting children by him; for it is very natural to believe, that *Jacob* did not conceal from his wives his advantages and hopes.

It appears that *Jacob*'s children, which were born, for the moſt part, in *Laban*'s houſe in *Chaldea*, where they had ſeen *Abraham*'s native country, and thoſe of their own kindred, from among whom God had commanded *Abraham* to depart, and to go into *Canaan*, did entertain very lively notions of thoſe important truths, eſpecially after they were ſtrengthened and confirmed by the cares and inſtructions of old *Iſaac*, to whom they were brought by *Jacob*; and after they began to practiſe in *Canaan* the worſhip and religion of their own family, and to compare it with the doctrine they had learnt in *Chaldea*.

Thoſe ſeveral voyages which God obliged the Patriarchs to undertake, as that of *Abraham* out of *Ur* of *Chaldea*, that of *Jacob* out of *Canaan*, (we ought to make the ſame judgment of *Moſes*'s forty years ſojourning amongſt the *Midianites*) did evidently oblige them to examine more carefully what was the tradition received in the ſeveral countries into which they travelled, and ſo to imprint the more deeply into their minds the belief of thoſe important truths which were the foundation of their religion, and the ſole object of the meditations of the faithful.

One ſees, in ſhort, the effects of theſe impreſſions,

1. By that cuſtom which ſeems to have begun in *Jacob*'s time, and which afterwards got the authority of a law; I mean, the cuſtom of taking to wife one's own brother's widow, to raiſe him up ſeed.

2. The ſin of *Onan* is repreſented ſo odious, only becauſe by it he acted againſt the belief of the promiſe.

3. We ſee the ſame thing in the action of *Thamar*, *Judah*'s daughter-in-law; for having been deceived by *Judah*, ſhe, in exchange, ſurpriſed him into an inceſt, the commiſſion whereof, according to the obſervation of a Greek commentator (*b*), ſhe ſought to perpetuate, only becauſe ſhe had a vehement deſire to get children out of a family which ſhe looked upon as ſolely intruſted with the promiſe of the *Meſſiah*, and out of which he was accordingly to be born.

It is neceſſary to make that obſervation, becauſe we ought always to remember that ſhe was formerly a *Canaanite*, and that conſequently ſhe left off and renounced the impiety and idolatry of her kindred, when ſhe embraced the religion and hopes of *Jacob*'s family. Therefore we ſee that particular mention is made of her in our Saviour's genealogy, and of *Ruth*, who likewiſe gave over all the pretenſions of her own people, and ſo forſook her religion to enter into the tribe of *Judah*, as well as of *Bathſhebah*, who was wife to a *Hittite*; whereupon an ancient father hath very well obſerved (*c*), according to the *Jewiſh* opinion, that *Shimei*'s revilings

(*b*) *Theoph.* in Mat. c. i.

(*c*) *S. Hieronym. in Tradit. Heb.* ad 1. Reg. 3.

revilings againſt *David*, when he went out of *Jeruſalem*, during *Abſalom*'s rebellion, reflected upon his birth out of the poſterity of *Ruth* the *Moabiteſs*, as the *Jews* even to this very day do underſtand it.

We may make the ſame reflexion upon the conſideration of that implacable jealouſy which *Joſeph*'s dreams raiſed in the minds of his brethren.

1. We may reaſonably conceive, that he being the firſt-born of *Rachel*, and the wife which *Jacob* his father had firſt made love to, he had been brought up with hopes of the birth-right, as well as *Iſaac*, who was but the ſecond ſon of *Abraham*.

But, 2. He might beſides very well ſuppoſe, that the crimes of his brethren born of *Leah* (whom in all likelihood he looked upon as the ſole legitimate heirs, the others being born of maid-ſervants) did rank them with *Eſau*, whom God had rejected. That outrageous fury which *Joſeph*'s brethren ſhewed againſt him, becauſe they looked upon him as preferred of God by thoſe dreams to thoſe that were born before him, is ſo like that of *Cain*, of *Lot*, of *Iſhmael*, and of *Eſau*, that it had, in all probability, the ſame cauſe and original.

Do we not ſee afterwards another effect of the ſame jealouſy in the affectation that *Jacob* and his family ſhewed in the land of *Egypt*, when they refuſed to live promiſcuouſly with the *Egyptians*, which were the poſterity of *Ham*, and begged of them a country where they might live by themſelves; as we ſee, on the contrary, the *Egyptians* ſhewing an extreme averſion againſt *Jacob* and his family, which was of *Shem*'s poſterity?

Certainly it cannot be denied, that as this ſeparation was an effect of the antipathy of thoſe nations, ſo it might alſo be in ſome reſpect the conſequence of *Jacob* and his children's pretenſions upon the promiſe of the *Meſſiah*, the execution and accompliſhment whereof they ſtood up for as belonging to themſelves.

To all this we may add, that the perſecution of the *Egyptians* againſt the *Iſraelites* obliged them to make particular reflexions upon the promiſe which *Jacob* on his death-bed made to them from God: that perſecution was chiefly intended againſt the the male children, *Pharaoh* commanding the extirpation of them, becauſe he was afraid of the *Jews* growing too ſtrong for him, and of their joining with his enemies; and perhaps alſo, becauſe the *Jews* entertaining a certain expectation of the *Meſſiah*'s coming, and ſo boaſting and glorying of it upon all occaſions, the *Egyptians* deſigned to fruſtrate and cut off their hope thus, by hindering the accompliſhment of the promiſe.

However, there was no real difficulty to keep up the diſtinct remembrance of thoſe important facts. *Jacob* died in the year of the world 2315; *Joſeph* died in the year of the world 2428. There are then but 58 years between *Joſeph*'s death and *Moſes*'s birth: *Moſes* might have ſeen not only *Amram* his own father, who had ſeen *Levi*, but alſo *Kohath* his grandfather, who had ſeen *Jacob*.

And it is for that reaſon that *Moſes* ſeems to have obſerved, that *Joſeph* ſaw his own children's children (*d*); that is to ſay, the third generation.

(*d*) Gen. l. 23.

One cannot imagine any circumſtances more conducible than theſe, to the preſerving the diſtinct knowledge of thoſe important truths which were the foundations of religion.

CHAP. XVII.

That the Tradition which gives us an account of the Perſuaſion which the Ancients had of the Truth of the Creation of the World, and of the Promiſe of the MESSIAH, *before* MOSES, *cannot be ſuſpected.*

I HAVE ſhewed, I think, evidently enough, that both the Creation, and the Promiſe of the *Meſſiah*, with all the other things depending upon them, might have been known certainly by *Adam* and his children, and ſo afterwards be handed down to all his poſterity till *Moſes*'s time.

From *Adam* to *Noah* there is but one man, viz. *Methuſelah*, who joined hands with both.

From *Noah* to *Abraham* there is but one man, viz. *Shem*, who ſaw them both for a conſiderable time.

From *Abraham* to *Joſeph* there is but one man, viz. *Iſaac*, *Joſeph*'s grandfather.

From *Joſeph* to *Moſes* there is but one man, viz. *Amram*, who might have ſeen *Joſeph* long enough.

Thoſe characters of time which *Moſes* hath ſo carefully obſerved, do plainly evidence that the creation, and the promiſe of the *Meſſiah*, might be diſtinctly known: for if we ſuppoſe a continued ſucceſſion of *Adam*'s offſpring, it was not eaſy to impoſe upon men in that matter; and that, becauſe every one of thoſe who were contemporaries with *Moſes*, being able to run up his own pedigree as far as the flood, nay, even up to *Adam*, by as compendious a way as *Moſes* could do his own, they would have treated thoſe with the utmoſt degree of ſcorn, who ſhould have attempted to forge any thing contrary to what was publicly and univerſally known; and ſo it was equally impoſſible, that the truth of things ſo important as the creation and the promiſe of the *Meſſiah* were, ſhould be unknown.

Beſides, I think I have plainly ſhewed, that many actions recorded by *Moſes*, though very ſtrange in themſelves, and which the Atheiſts look upon as abſurd and ridiculous, have proceeded from no other principle than fromthe ſtrong perſuaſion of the truth of thoſe facts, according as, in a long ſeries of ages, every one of the ancients, following his own humour and prejudices, framed to himſelf a particular idea differing from the true ſenſe of the promiſe of the *Meſſiah*.

It cannot reaſonably be objected, that all this is only grounded upon the uncertain authority of tradition; for though I grant that tradition, as to facts of another nature, be dubious and uncertain, and not to be too

oo much relied upon in matter of belief, yet this hath ſuch very parti-cular characters as keep up its own authority.

Firſt, it ſuppoſeth a ſmall number of perſons from *Adam* to *Moſes*, who put it in writing.

Secondly, it ſuppoſeth, that thoſe who have preſerved this tradition, ived very long, and for the moſt part for many centuries of years.

Thirdly, it relates to ſuch facts as every one is deſirous to be rightly nformed of, and which he is particularly concerned to examine, as elating to his own private intereſt, becauſe they are the principles of his actions, and the rules of his conduct both in civil and religious matters.

Fourthly, it ſuppoſeth ſuch real marks as ſerved to keep it up; ſuch as, the pains of child-bearing, the paradiſe before the flood, the duration of the ark after the flood.

Fifthly, it ſuppoſeth a public ſervice and worſhip, whoſe celebration is repeated fifty-two times a year, that the remembrance of it ſhould be preſerved by all poſterity.

Sixthly, it was preſerved entire by paſſing from father to ſon; and we know that fathers or mothers do not naturally engage in a deſign of de-ceiving their children.

Seventhly, it ſuppoſeth ſtrange controverſies betwixt brothers, the elder having almoſt been excluded, and the younger, as *Abel*, *Seth*, *Abraham*, *Iſaac*, *Jacob*, *Judah*, choſen to accompliſh the promiſe of the *Meſſiah*, which bred great jealouſies, and tended much to preſerve thoſe ideas of the truth.

Laſtly, it ſuppoſeth great conteſts betwixt whole nations, who all ſtrove one with another for the advantage of being the heirs of the pro-miſe, and depoſitaries of thoſe verities; as the *Moabites*, for inſtance, the *Ammonites*, the *Iſhmaelites*, the *Edomites*, and the *Jews*: each of them pretending to a preference before the others, by God himſelf, and ſo making it a matter of credit and honour to themſelves. All theſe cha-racters contribute to the diſtinct preſervation of the knowledge of any truth.

CHAP. XVIII.

An Explication of MOSES's *Way of Writing; where it is ſhewed, that in writing the Book of* GENESIS *he mentioned nothing but what was then generally known.*

THIS is a truth which at firſt I took for granted, and afterwards proved it, the reaſons whereof I explained particularly as I went on. But it ought to be fixed as ſolidly as the matter will bear, becauſe it often happens, that thoſe who do not foreſee the conſequences which may be drawn from the contrary opinion, do contradict it before they are aware of it; and that too, under pretence of exalting the Divine

authority of the book of *Geneſis:* which gives occaſion to the Atheiſts t look upon it no otherwiſe than as learned men do on the greateſt part o legends.

The prophetical ſpirit acts in two manners.

The firſt is, by way of revelation, in reſpect of thoſe things the prophe hath no knowledge of. Thus the *Evangeliſt* St. *John* had foretold thoſ events which we read of in the *Revelations:* for thoſe events being all hidden under the ſhadows of futurity, it was impoſſible for him to have foretold them, unleſs the ſpirit of God had immediately revealed them to him.

The ſecond is, by way of direction, in reſpect of thoſe things with which the Prophets was himſelf acquainted, either becauſe he was an eye-witneſs of them himſelf, or becauſe he learnt them from thoſe who were ſo.

Now this direction of the ſpirit conſiſts in the guiding the Prophet ſo as that he may write of his ſubject, juſt as it was either ſpoken or done. Thus the Evangeliſts St. *Matthew* and St. *John* drew up an abridgment of thoſe ſermons of our Saviour which they had heard, and of thoſe miracles which they had ſeen.

And thus St. *Luke* and St. *Mark* have written of thoſe things which they had heard from thoſe that were eye-witneſſes of them, as St. *Luke* particularly tells us.

Now I affirm, that when *Moſes* wrote the book of *Geneſis*, he had only the ſecond ſort of prophetical influences, and not the firſt; although in our diſputes againſt Atheiſts, to convince them by arguments from matters of fact, we may conſider him only as an hiſtorian, who might have written his book without any other particular direction, and might have preſerved it in the memory of thoſe ancient events which were then generally known.

Now, what ſide ſoever Divines may take in their diſputes againſt the Atheiſts, I may eaſily eſtabliſh my aſſertion: firſt, becauſe it is not neceſſary to ſuppoſe an entire revelation, where tradition being diſtinct enough, is ſufficient to preſerve a clear remembrance of all thoſe facts.

Now it cannot be denied, but that the tradition concerning the creation and the promiſe of the Meſſiah was of this nature, eſpecially if we conſider the little extent of it, and the immediate ſucceſſion of *Moſes*'s anceſtors, down to himſelf.

Secondly, if *Abraham*'s and *Jacob*'s travels through ſo many places were, as I have obſerved already, very uſeful to give them a further view of the common belief of all the ſeveral nations deſcended from *Noah*, and of their agreement in this tradition, it were unjuſt to ſuppoſe that *Moſes*'s forty years ſojourning in the country of *Midian*, and that too when he was forty years old, and conſequently had that ripeneſs of age and judgment as is fitteſt for ſuch obſervations, did not ſerve to acquaint him with the ſeveral paſſages he records of *Abraham*, as well as of the ſeveral diviſions of his poſterity.

Thirdly, we may obſerve in the book of *Geneſis* a way of writing very different from that which we ſee in the greateſt part of *Exodus*, and in the following books; for whereas God ſpeaks to him in thoſe latter books, which he always did *vivâ voce*. (And the *Jews* have wiſely obſerved,

erved, that herein conſiſted *Moſes*'s advantage above the other Pro-
ts, to whom God was uſed to ſpeak only in dreams and viſions.) He
s commonly thoſe words, *And the Lord ſpake unto me.* He marks out
place where God ſpoke to him, as well as the time and occaſion of
d's ſpeaking to him, which he does not in his book of *Geneſis*.

Fourthly, the book of *Geneſis* is not divided into ſeveral revelations,
ll prophecies are, wherein the ſeveral returns of the holy Spirit of
d are all exactly ſet down; which was abſolutely neceſſary, not only
eaſe the reader, who might be tired if he was to carry a long ſeries of
dictions in his mind at once, as if it were only one ſingle viſion or
velation, but alſo to condeſcend to the nature of the minds of men:
, according to the rules of probability, we cannot ſuppoſe them to be
ed with ſo many differing ideas at the ſame time, but a great confu-
n muſt neceſſarily follow.

But ſuppoſing that theſe obſervations ſhould be thought inſufficient,
t thoſe that follow will ſeem capable of convincing the minds of all.
here are in the book of *Geneſis* certain characters of its being written in
at way which I ſpeak of. Firſt, one needs only juſt look into that
ok, and he will ſee that the ancienteſt facts, which are thoſe of which
e moſt deſire a particular account, are there deſcribed in a very ſhort and
nciſe manner. The hiſtory of 1656 years is all contained in eight chap-
rs; there are no actions deſcribed therein with more circumſtances
an only ſome few of the moſt important, the remembrance whereof
as ſtill freſh amongſt them. The hiſtory of *Lamech*'s polygamy, and
e murders of which he was guilty, is there ſet down ſo compendiouſly,
at it is very obſcure.

Secondly, one ſees that he ſpeaks more copiouſly of all that had been
anſacted near his time: he explains and mentions all the particulars
nd circumſtances thereof. He ſpeaks ſo ſhortly of *Melchiſedeck*, that it
doubted to this day whether he was not the Patriarch *Shem*, or ſome
ther faithful worſhipper of the true God ſettled in the land of *Canaan*;
hereas he ſets down at length all the particulars of the hiſtory of *Abra-
am*, of *Iſaac*, and of *Jacob*, whoſe laſt oracles, which he ſpoke on his
eath-bed, he carefully records.

Thirdly, he deſcribes with the ſame exactneſs all the genealogies of
he *Edomites*, their ſeveral tribes, and the names of their heads and
aptains, &c. as when he ſpeaks of thoſe of the people of *Iſrael*, which
ndeed he could eaſily do, having lived forty years of his life amongſt
hoſe nations, as well as he had other forty years amongſt the *Iſraelites*.

Thoſe who maintain the contrary opinion, muſt of neceſſity ſuppoſe,
rſt, That tradition is of no uſe at all to preſerve the idea of any illuſ-
rious action.

Secondly, That in *Moſes*'s time there were none who knew any parti-
ul ars of the hiſtory of the flood, &c. of the tower of *Babel*, of the di-
iſion of tongues; though we ſee plainly, both by the nature of the facts
hemſelves, in which all nations were concerned, and by *Moſes* his
eſcription, that the generality of mankind were ſufficiently inſtructed
n them already.

Thirdly, It muſt be ſuppoſed that *Moſes* hath ſet down the manner
how

how that tradition was infallibly preſerved ſo carefully to no purpo
though he took notice of all the circumſtances neceſſary for that effec

Fourthly, They muſt ſuppoſe that *Moſes*, whilſt he ſojourned in
land of *Midian*, heard nothing either of their original and pedigree, r
yet of the other neighbouring nations who were deſcended from *Abr*
ham, although all theſe nations valued themſelves upon their bei
deſcended from that Patriarch, and kept up their ſeveral pedigrees,
which they could trace their original with the ſame care as the *Iſraeli*
did theirs, becauſe they had the ſame pretenſions that the *Iſraelites* had

Laſtly, We muſt abſolutely take away the authority of the orac
recorded by *Moſes* in *Geneſis*. Theſe oracles promiſe to *Abraham* t
poſſeſſion of the land of *Canaan* for his poſterity, and threaten the *C*
naanites with ſeveral curſes. *Jacob* by his will bequeathed *Sichem* to t
tribe of *Joſeph*: he expreſsly marks out the country which one of t
tribes was to poſſeſs; he gives a deſcription of the character and rank
every tribe. The accompliſhment of thoſe oracles, though never ſo exa
and admirable, is of no manner of conſequence, if we ſuppoſe that the
particular predictions were abſolutely unknown in *Abraham*'s family
whereas their accompliſhment, which he carefully deſcribes from tim
to time, is the moſt ſolid demonſtration which can be deſired, to eſtabli
the divinity of thoſe revelations, as well as of *Moſes* his other books.

CHAP. XIX.

An Anſwer to an Objection which may be drawn from the Hiſtories of th
Egyptians *and* Chaldeans, *concerning the Antiquity of the World.*

WHAT I have already repreſented is ſufficient to prove that *Moſe*
writ nothing in the book of *Geneſis*, but what was then gene-
rally known by all the world. And I know nothing that can be objected
with any probability, but what we read in the moſt ancient authors
concerning the *Egyptian* and *Chaldean* hiſtory, and in the modern ones
concerning that of *China*. We muſt then examine both the one and the
other with attention, that we may leave no difficulties in ſo important
a ſubject.

All that the Atheiſts can object againſt the hiſtory of *Moſes*, concern-
ing the *epocha* of the creation of the world as he had fixed it, is what
Diodorus Siculus relates, that in the time of *Alexander* the Great there were
ſome *Egyptians* that reckoned up three and twenty thouſand years from
the reign of the ſun to *Alexander*'s time, and that thoſe who reckoned
leaſt, yet reckoned ſomewhat more than ten thouſand years; which
account exceeds the antiquity which *Moſes* aſcribes to the world in the
book of *Geneſis*, by many ages, where he repreſents the creation as a fact
which happened ſome few years more than two thouſand five hundred

before

e he wrote that book. How then did *Moſes* write of things univer-
acknowledged by all the world? And they may here further aggra-
what the ſame *Diodorus* hath obſerved, that the hiſtory of the
tians was not written like that of the *Greeks*; amongſt whom, thoſe
came firſt wrote their own hiſtories, every man according to his
private humour, which cauſed that great variety amongſt their hiſ-
ns: whereas amongſt the *Egyptians* none wrote but by public au-
ity, the prieſts alone having that particular employment reſerved for
, to write their hiſtories in their ſeveral generations.

his objection is eaſily confuted in two words: in ſhort, how could
Egyptians have always had men to write their hiſtories by public au-
ity in all their ſucceeding generations, ſeeing there were, as *Diodorus*
rves, ſuch ſtrange and vaſt diviſions amongſt themſelves? If there
e but two or three ages difference, more or leſs, nobody would
upon it as a material exception againſt the hiſtory of ſuch a long
s of time; but who can imagine that thoſe men who differ no leſs
thirteen thouſand years in their accounts of the duration of the ſame
rval of time, had yet certain hiſtories upon which theſe things were
unded?

his ſhews ſufficiently, that as *Varro*, the greateſt ſcholar the *Romans*
had, hath divided antiquity into fabulous and hiſtorical, which he
ins from the firſt *Olympiad*, leaving all which went before to the fa-
ous part, ſo we muſt of neceſſity make the ſame diſtinction in the
ter of the antiquities of *Egypt*.

But I intend to do ſomething more, and to conſider this *Egyptian* hiſtory
h a little more attention; out of which, I think, I may draw good
uments to confute the vanity of thoſe paſſages in it oppoſed to *Moſes*,
to confirm the authority of his book of *Geneſis*, and the truth of the
efeſt tranſactions recorded in it.

I ſhall not at preſent take notice, that although the *Egyptians*, about
ir latter times, have maintained that the elements were eternal, yet
y have ſufficiently acknowledged that the world had a beginning,
ing they make no mention of any thing before their thirty Dynaſties,
ich in all did at the moſt amount to no more than 36525 years.
Neither do I think neceſſary to mention here that they have ſufficiently
knowledged the beginning of mankind, ſeeing they held that men were
t born in *Egypt*; although they endeavoured to make good their pre-
nſions by that ſottiſh aſſertion of the eaſy production of frogs out of
e mud of their fens, as the ſame *Diodorus* tells us.

But there are three things which I muſt here take notice of, becauſe
ey do moſt certainly decide the queſtion.

The firſt is, That by that long reign which they aſcribe to their gods
d heroes, there is nothing elſe meant but the motion of the ſtars, and
thing like a real kingdom. That prodigious number of years does
t relate to the duration of the world, as if it had ſubſiſted ſo long;
it to the return of the ſun, and the moon, and the five other planets,
d of the heavens, to the ſame point from whence, according to the
inion of the *Egyptians*, they firſt began their courſe: in a word, it is
ly the great aſtronomical year, about which, as *Ariſtotle* tells us, the
cients have had ſo many different opinions, and the *Egyptians* have ſo
little

little agreed, as the hiſtory of their antiquities, related by *Diodorus*, pla
ſhews. One thing evidently proves what I here alledge, which is,
they have reckoned up but fifteen Dynaſties to *Jupiter*, the laſt of
heroes, that is to ſay, but fifteen perſons to *Jupiter*, who is *Ham*
third ſon of *Noah*.

This comes very near *Moſes*'s calculation, who reckoneth *Noah* as
tenth man from *Adam*: for it is very likely that thoſe ignorant peo
after a long proceſs of time, have joined *Cain* and *Abel* with *Shem*
Japhet, and *Miſraim* the ſon of *Ham*, which makes up the ſixteen
naſties; except we chooſe to ſay that the *Egyptians* thought fit to join
ſeven generations of *Cain* to thoſe before the flood, which comes
near to the ſame account. All this, according to the fantaſtic noti
of thoſe ancient people who deified the firſt men, and gave them af
wards the names of ſome ſtars, to impreſs upon their poſterity a gre
veneration for them; and in particular, according to the ground
imagination of the *Egyptians*, who were reſolved to maintain that
firſt men were formed in their own country. And in ſhort we find
thoſe Dynaſties for the moſt part, if we except thoſe of *Vulcan*
of the ſun, have been but of a very ſhort continuance, and even ſho
than that which *Moſes* aſcribes to the lives of the ancient Patriarc
which we have already ſet down.

The ſecond thing that is obſervable in the confutation of this falſe
tiquity, if one would take what the *Egyptians* have related of their
naſties before *Menes*, and *Jupiter* the laſt of their heroes, in a hiſtori
ſenſe, is, that there are ſtill ſufficient marks of the newneſs of the wo
as *Moſes* hath deſcribed it, in the remaining fragments of the true *Eg*
tian hiſtory.

Firſt, We ſee that *Egypt* hath conſtantly carried the name of *H*
amongſt the *Gentiles*, as well as in the holy Scriptures. It was called
in *Plutarch*'s time: the *Egyptian Thebes* was called *Hammon No Eze*
30. which is the name of the *Egyptian Jupiter*, as the heathen auth
Herodotus and *Plutarch* teſtify. Now it is viſible that all this was for
other reaſon but becauſe *Egypt* had fallen to the ſhare of *Ham*, *Noa*
third ſon, who ſettled there, and whoſe poſterity did afterwards pe
ple *Africa*, and gave it their ſeveral names, as *Moſes* particularly o
ſerves.

Secondly, One ſees that *Egypt* hath more particularly borne the na
of *Mizraim*, which it bears ſtill, and which was given to it, in reſpe
of one of its parts, becauſe of *Mizraim* the ſon of *Ham*. And it wou
be ridiculous for one to imagine that thoſe characters given by *Moſes*, h
been allowed of in the world, except he had had good grounds to deſcri
their original in the ſame manner as he hath already done.

Thirdly, One ſees that all the Dynaſties of *Egypt*, that is to ſay,
the ſeveral branches of the kings who have reigned over the ſeveral pa
of *Egypt*, did all acknowledge *Menes* for their common founder.

This *Menes* being the ſame with that *Mizraim* of *Moſes*, as I ſha
ſhew hereafter; it is viſible that the *Egyptians*, who in all likeliho
have aſcribed to *Menes* what they might more juſtly have aſcribed to *J*
piter Hammon, becauſe they would diſtinguiſh their kings from heroe
have exactly followed the ideas of *Moſes*, in repreſenting one as the con

mo

ather of all the ſeveral branches of kings who divided *Egypt* amongſt
elves.

urthly, One ſees that the invention of the arts moſt neceſſary to
n life have been attributed either to *Menes* the firſt king of *Egypt*,
his ſucceſſors. It was this *Menes*, or one of his ſucceſſors, who
ted laws, letters, aſtronomy, muſic, wreſtling, phyſic, hierogly-
, anatomy, and architecture. All this plainly ſhews that the *Egyp-*
had been miſtaken, if they had aſcribed to the world as great an
uity as one would think they did, by the vaſt extent of time which
aſcribed to the Dynaſties of their gods and heroes. How could
orld have continued above thirty thouſand years without thoſe arts
h are ſo neceſſary for the convenience of human life? How could
not have found out, during ſuch a prodigious ſucceſſion of ages,
arts, the invention whereof the *Egyptians* do aſcribe to their firſt
, or to one or two of his ſucceſſors, during a very ſhort interval of
?

fthly, One ſees in the hiſtory of *Egypt* the ſame decay in religion
Moſes ſpeaks of (*e*). The ancients unanimouſly agree that the
tians had at firſt neither ſtatues nor images in their temples, which
ctly agrees with what *Moſes* tells us of the times after the flood:
hey tell us alſo, that the *Egyptians* afterwards made ſome ſtatues,
conſecrated in their temples the figures of great numbers of animals.
e are of opinion, and that probably enough, that this came from the
f which they entertained afterwards of the tranſmigration of ſouls
other animals, an opinion which they thought did neceſſarily flow
the doctrine of the immortality of the ſoul.

xthly, However, one ſees in the ſixth place, that as *Moſes* repreſents
rod, one of *Ham*'s poſterity, as the founder of an empire in *Aſſyria*,
re he formed the manners of the inhabitants according to the plat-
of the *Egyptian* principles, ſo the ancients have obſerved, that the
ous *Aſſyrian Belus* came out of *Egypt*; and it is natural to conceive,
there he planted idolatry, which began even before *Abraham*'s
(*f*); if it be true, as the *Jews* obſerve, that the tower of *Babel* was
mple, wherein an idol was conſecrated to worſhip him. At leaſt,
conjecture hath a very ſolid ground, if we conſider the idolatry of
Babylonians towards this *Bel*, whom they worſhipped as a god, ac-
ing to the Pagans cuſtom of adoring the founders of kingdoms, after
deceaſe, as gods.

The third thing we are here to take notice of, contains a demonſtra-
of the truth of the book *Geneſis*, if that which is recorded in it con-
ing the time of the flood, be compared with the Dynaſties of the
ptian kings. I will not ſay that thoſe *Egyptians* who had any know-
e of the flood, did exactly mark out the time of it, as *Moſes* doth;
I believe I may be able to ſhew out of their common opinions, ſome-
g very near equivalent.

They are all agreed that *Menes* was the firſt king of *Egypt*, and lived
ut fourteen hundred years before the famous *Seſoſtris*, as *Herodotus*
Diodorus Siculus do both relate it: now, who ſhould this king of
Egypt

e) *Herod.* lib. ii. cap. 4. *Lucian* de Dea Syr.
f) *Pauſan.* in *Meſſen.* p. 261.

Egypt be, whom ſome call *Seſonchoſis*, unleſs he is the ſame with *Shi* whom the Scripture ſpeaks of in the hiſtory of *Rehoboam* (*g*), even ſame famous conqueror who took *Jeruſalem* in the fifth year of *R boam*'s reign? If one calculates the time from the flood to the fifth of *Rehoboam*, he will find that this *Menes*, the firſt king of *Egypt*, is other than the *Ham* of *Moſes*; and on the other ſide, that there is little difference, in reſpect to that interval of time, betwixt the chronol of the *Egyptians* and that of the Scriptures. Thus the *Egyptian* count confirms *Moſes*'s narrative, and the authority of the holy writ who are very particular in ſtating the times of every thing: whereas *Egyptians*, taking all in great, could never arrive at that exactneſs.

This obſervation is of very great uſe, to ſhew the certainty of *Mo* chronology according to the *Hebrew* text; for that of the *Septua* reckons up above two thouſand years from the flood to *Seſoſtris*; when the *Egyptians* did reckon up but a little above fourteen hundred ye from *Menes*, the firſt king of *Egypt*, to *Seſoſtris*.

There is leſs difficulty to anſwer the objection which may be m againſt the book of *Geneſis*, from the pretended antiquity of the *Ch deans*. The ſame *Diodorus Siculus* (*h*) who ſaith that the *Egypti* propoſed ſo great an antiquity of the world, tells us alſo that the *Ch deans* believed it eternal, and that they boaſted, in *Alexander*'s time, t they had learned aſtronomy by tradition, from their anceſtors, who had ſucceſſively made it their ſtudy for four hundred ſeventy-two thouſa years together. But there is nothing vainer than theſe pretences.

I ſhall not ſtand to ſhew here the folly of their opinions about the ete nity of the world: if *Ariſtotle* ſeems to have authoriſed it, yet it is enou to confute that opinion, to conſider, that it is repugnant to the comm notion of all the nations of the world; ſo that *Democritus* himſelf, w pretended that the world was made by chance, yet durſt not oppoſe t common and general opinion of the world's being new, though he h the boldneſs to reject the author of it, and that action by which it w created.

Neither do I intend to be prolix here in confuting the ſuppoſition the *Chaldeans*, about their anceſtors following the ſtudy of aſtrology f 472000 years ſucceſſively: the impoſſibility of the thing in itſelf is a parent by the certainty of the flood, which was acknowledged by all tho nations of whom we have any antiquities, though never ſo little conſide able, in *Pagan* authors.

But I ſhall make two obſervations, whereof one ſhews the folly of t *Chaldean* hypotheſis, and the other doth invincibly eſtabliſh the authori of the book of *Geneſis*, if it be compared with what we know for certai and in the *Chaldean* hiſtory.

The firſt is, That the moſt ancient authors are of opinion, that t *Chaldeans* are deſcended from the *Egyptians*, who looked upon them as colony of their own. *Diodorus Siculus* ſaith, that the *Egyptians* maintaine that they had ſent out ſeveral colonies into ſeveral parts of the world; th *Belus* the ſon of *Neptune* and *Lybia*, had conducted one into *Babylon*, an that having fixed it near *Euphrates*, he eſtabliſhed ſome prieſts amon ther

(*g*) I. Kings xiv. 26.
(*h*) *Diodor.* l. 2. ſect. 30, 31.

n according to the *Egyptian* cuſtom, who were free from all public
ges and offices, whom the *Babylonians* do call *Chaldeans*, and who,
rding to the example of the *Egyptian* prieſts, philoſophers, and aſtro-
rs, did apply themſelves to the obſervation of the ſtars. *Heſtiæus*
Pauſanias ſay the ſame with *Diodorus* (*i*).

ſow, one need only examine here, what the *Egyptians* do ſay about
nvention of *aſtrology*, which they aſcribe to *Menes*, that is to ſay, to
n, or to *Mizraim*, who lived after the flood, thereby to diſcover the
iſh vanity of the *Chaldeans*.

is plain that the *Chaldeans* grew ſo vain, by the growth of ſo con-
rable an empire as theirs was, that they would be no longer beholding
ne *Egyptian* aſtrologers, whom all other nations have looked upon as
firſt inventors of that ſcience, to the inventing and perfecting of
ch, all men know that the *Egyptian* climate, where the ſky is always
from clouds, did very much contribute.

nd it is very conſiderable, that both the *Chaldeans* and the *Egpptians*
an their year with the ſame month, according to *Cenſorinus*'s obſer-
on, c. xxi. *de Die Nat.*

know very well, the ancient heathens were miſtaken when they pre-
led that the *Chaldeans* went out of *Egypt*, as a plantation: there is,
doubt, a kind of illuſion in this their opinion; but yet the ground
origin of it is uncontrollable, becauſe the *Chaldeans* are deſcended
n *Cuſh*, *Ham*'s eldeſt ſon, as *Moſes* tells, *Gen.* x. Therefore, though
ſhould grant that the *Chaldeans* were the firſt inventors of aſtrology,
this would always be certain, that it was found out only ſince *Ham*'s
e, whom the *Egyptians* did look upon as the laſt of their heroes, or as
firſt of their kings.

The other obſervation which ought to be well minded here, is taken
of the true and genuine *Chaldean* antiquities. One may prove by the
onomical demonſtrations of the *Chaldeans*, which the people of *Iſrael*
altogether unacquainted with, that *Moſes* followed a calculation
ich was then generally known.

Ariſtotle, the firſt *Grecian* that ever taught the eternity of the world,
trary to *Moſes*'s hiſtory, is the man who furniſhes us with it. He
k care to ſend over into *Greece* the aſtronomical obſervations of the
ldeans (*k*), by which it appeared that *Babylon* was taken by *Alexander*
ut 1903 years after its foundation. Now that calculation agrees
ctly with that of *Moſes*, who gives us the deſcription of the tower of
bel (*l*), and explains the original of the name of that city, which was
lt ſome ages after, by the confuſion of tongues which then happened.
d truly, it would be very admirable, that the heavens in their motions
uld have entered into a confederacy with *Moſes*, to juſtify a chronology
ented by him in ſport, without keeping to any rules, but writing by
nce, and without any certain principle.

(*i*) *Ap. Joſeph. Antiq.* l. 1. c. 5. *Pauſan. Meſſen.* p. 261.
(*k*) *Simplic.* in l. 2. *de cælo.* (*l*) Gen. xi.

CHAP. XX.

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An Anſwer to the Objection which may be drawn out of the Hiſtory of China *againſt the Moſaic Hypotheſis, concerning the Newneſs of the World.*

I COME now to the other objection which may be made agai *Moſes*'s calculation, according to the *Hebrew* text, as we have now. It is drawn from the Hiſtory of *China*, whoſe uninterrupted ſer runs up the ſucceſſion of their emperors to *Fohius*, who reigned abo four hundred years before the flood. Some learned men have alrea made uſe of that argument, to diſcredit the Moſaic chronology accor ing to the *Hebrew* text, and to cry up the calculation of the Septuagi which exceeds that of the *Hebrew* text in the hiſtory before the flood, 800 years, and above 700 in the hiſtory from the flood to *Moſes*. Th objection appears very ſtrong to thoſe who read in the hiſtory of *Ma tinus*, that there is not the leaſt interruption in the catalogue of the kin of *China* from *Fohius*; that the hiſtory of their actions is ſo certai having always been written by a public authority, that no man can re ſonably entertain any doubt about it: and the miſſionaries in *China* ha thought that there was no other way to reconcile the Moſaic chronolog with the *Chineſe*, but in making uſe of the Septuagint's account; a wherein they agree with all the Aſiatic Chriſtians, and even thoſe *Europe*, who follow the *Septuagint* in their reckoning up the years the world, for the moſt part; though St. *Hierome*'s tranſlation, whic follows the *Hebrew* text exactly, is received in the weſt.

But, after all, there is little difficulty in anſwering this objection; a we may hereupon eaſily ſatisfy thoſe who do not diſpute only for di puting ſake, but are ready to examine this queſtion with that equi which is requiſite in the examination of all queſtions of that nature.

I confeſs, ingenuouſly, that this hiſtory, which is one of the mo ancient in the world, hath many illuſtrious characters of certainty, eſpe cially if we give credit to all that *Martinus* relates of it.

Firſt, it marks out exactly the ſeries and ſucceſſion of all the kings *China*, from the very beginning and original of that nation.

Secondly, it records in what year of each cycle of threeſcore yea every king began his reign, and did ſuch or ſuch an action.

Thirdly, it relates ſome aſtronomical obſervations, older than an that have been made by the moſt ancient aſtronomers in other nations.

Fourthly, it was written by a public authority, and by ſuch autho as lived in the time when the things which they record were tranſacted the immediate ſucceſſor to the empire taking always care, that the hiſtor of his predeceſſor ſhould be written.

Nay, to all this we muſt add, that the *Chineſe*'s way of writing, makin no uſe of letters, but of hieroglyphics, may have prevented the alterations which might otherwiſe have been made in their hiſtory; th whol

hole life of a man being hardly ſufficient to attain to the perfect owledge of a tongue which hath above threeſcore thouſand figures, hich muſt be all learnt before a man can be able only to read and ite.

But, beſides that, all this depends upon the ſole authority of *Martinius*, body elſe beſide him having given us as yet any opportunities of exa- ning thoſe ancient monuments of *China*. We may find out of this y hiſtory ſome ſtrong proofs to confirm that of *Moſes*, and ſo eaſily olve the difficulties which may be raiſed out of it, againſt the book *Geneſis*.

Firſt, *F. Martinius* obſerves, that the common opinion of the *Chineſe* that the world had a beginning; and though there be ſome of them *Epicurus*'s opinion, yet there was never any amongſt them that was the eternity of the world, but ſince the incarnation of *Chriſt*, and introduction of idolatry amongſt them.

Secondly, he tells us, that they commonly acknowledge a God, whom ey call *Xangti*, which is not the name, but the epithet of God, this ord ſignifying ſupreme governor of heaven and earth.

Thirdly, he ſaith that they acknowledge a firſt man, brought forth out the chaos, in one night in the ſpring; which opinion ſome amongſt em have made intricate, by the addition of their own fables.

Fourthly, he ſhews that ſacrifices have been in uſe amongſt them.

Fifthly, that they believe a certainty of puniſhments and rewards, er this life, for vice and virtue.

Sixthly, that they believe the exiſtence of good and bad angels.

Seventhly, that they aſſign to ſome of them the protection of cities d provinces, and pay them great veneration at the inſtalment of their agiſtrates.

Eighthly, that they acknowledge them to be incorporeal beings, and at it is but of late that they have erected and conſecrated ſtatues to em.

And laſtly, that they have a very great knowledge of the flood, hich in their account happened about 3500 years before *Jeſus Chriſt*.

Here are, we ſee, many truths which are the grounds of religion, d which were known to them; from whence we may eaſily judge, in mparing thoſe truths with the hiſtory of *Moſes*, that the ancient *Chi- ſe* did agree with all other nations, in the believing the firſt prin- ples of religion laid down by *Moſes*.

We may likewiſe obſerve, that thoſe antiquities of *China*, for the moſt rt, are as like thoſe recorded by *Moſes*, as a tradition (which cannot ıt have received many alterations during ſuch an interval of time) can like to an exact narrative of matters of fact drawn up by an author ho knew very well what he writ.

Firſt, it appears that what they ſay concerning the thirteen ſucceſſors the firſt man, named *Puoncuus*, all deſcended from him, is agreeable ough to the hiſtory of *Geneſis*, which ſets down the ſucceſſive Patriarchs om father to ſon: all the difference is, that the *Chineſe*, by a fooliſh mbition of appropriating all to themſelves, maintain that thoſe thirteen ngs were all in *China*.

Secondly, what they tell us of the world being civilized under th ſecond of thoſe kings, called *Thienhoang*, after the death of the great dra gon that had diſturbed heaven and earth, agrees very well with the hiſtor of *Seth*, who began to form mankind to a right notion of the worſhip o God, when he ſeparated them from *Cain*'s family.

Thirdly, it is very probable that when the *Chineſe* have reckoned u thirteen kings lineally deſcended from the firſt man and his ſucceſſors they have included in that number *Cain* and *Abel*, who, though the were both the ſons of the firſt man, yet were not reckoned up by *Moſes* becauſe his ſcope was only to give an account of the lineal deſcent o *Adam*'s poſterity by *Seth*.

They believe that under *Ginhohang* there was a kind of golden age the earth being then fruitful to admiration; and that under his ſucceſſo men being then extremely ſimple, and altogether ignorant of the ſevera arts neceſſary to human life, as of characters and letters, one *Sujus*, t ſupply the want of them, contrived a way of keeping up the memory o things, by tying ſeveral ſorts of knots upon a cord.

All which ſufficiently evinces, that the belief of the world's bein lately created, according to *Moſes*'s deſcription, was as much received b the ancient people of *China* as by all other nations.

And here it is further obſervable, That the *Chineſe* themſelves, accord ing to *Martinius*'s account, do ſuſpect all the hiſtorical records of thei empire, before king *Fohius*, looking upon them as falſe and ridiculous and indeed the people of that country, before *Fohius*, living like brut beaſts, without any ſettled governments, laws, or arts, this alone i enough to confute thoſe amongſt the *Chineſe* who maintain nowadays that the duration of the world before *Confucius*, who lived about 50 years before *Jeſus Chriſt*, was of no leſs than three millions two hundre threeſcore and ſeven thouſand years; for hereby it clearly appears, tha they have fooliſhly affected to ſurpaſs the *Chaldeans* in their vanity, who believing the eternity of the world, pretended, in order both to prov their antiquity, and to give credit to their aſtrological obſervations, tha aſtrology had been exerciſed amongſt them for 472000 years befor *Alexander*'s entering into *Aſia*.

After all, it is certain, that their calculation of 3000 years, from *Fohiu* to *Jeſus Chriſt*, is only incompatible with *Moſes*'s chronology, accordin to the *Hebrew* text, and not at all with that of the *Septuagint*.

But moreover, what can be more palpably fabulous than the whol hiſtory of *Fohius*, whom the *Chineſe* ſuppoſe to have begun his reign 295 years before *Jeſus Chriſt*? Firſt, he is called the Son of Heaven, be cauſe, they ſay, he had a mother and no father; and that his mothe conceived him by the banks of a lake near the town *Lanthieu*, where as ſhe was walking, ſhe ſaw the footſteps of a man upon the ſand, an was at the ſame time ſurrounded on a ſudden with a rainbow.

Secondly, the ſituation of that town, which is in the weſt of *China*, doe demonſtrate that the firſt inhabitants of *China* came either from th weſtern parts of the world, and that conſequently they were of *Shem* poſterity, according to *Moſes*'s account in the tenth of *Geneſis*.

Thirdly, although there be perhaps no incongruity in their aſcribin to him the ſtudy of aſtronomy, and the invention of ſeveral inſtitution neceſſar

eſſary to human ſociety, as laws, &c. yet what they add, that he was firſt inventor of ſeveral figures, which he had ſeen upon the back of ragon, ſufficiently ſhews, that either the whole hiſtory is but a fable, that he was a cheat, and impoſed upon the ſimplicity of ignorant ple.

What probability is there (ſeeing it is ſuppoſed *China* was then all r infeſted and overgrown with barbariſm) that in his time it ſhould recorded in writing, 1. That he invented, inſtead of thoſe knots be- mentioned, the *hieroglyphics*, which are almoſt as obſcure; 2. That n were then diſtinguiſhed from women by the difference of their gar- nts; 3. That marriages were then fixed and regulated, which before e as promiſcuous amongſt men as amongſt beaſts?

What they ſay of his being the author of a muſical inſtrument of 36 rds, ſhews evidently the falſehood of the ſtory; for there is nothing re improbable, than to ſuppoſe that he ſhould arrive to ſuch perfection mprovement in muſic as that comes to, when that art had but very ly been invented. It is all that men could attain unto, after they e long improved this art, the beginnings whereof, without doubt, as ll other arts, were very rough and imperfect.

urely the *Egyptians* were more reaſonable when they attributed the ention of the *lyre* with three ſtrings to *Mercury*, *Saturn*'s ſecretary, o is the ſame with *Noah*.

The hiſtory of *China* takes notice that the beginning of huſbandry and ſic was under *Fohius*'s ſucceſſor; it does not mention whether he was ſon, or no; but it only gives an account of the firſt war, wherein was routed by a petty king, one of his ſubjects, who ſucceeded him he empire.

And what is moſt ſingular in that record, is, that therein is aſcribed hat uſurper, 1. the invention of the *cycle* of 60 years, which ſerves ix their chronology; 2. the method of regulating weights and mea- s; 3. that it was by his means and encouragement that ſome of his temporary ſubjects found out the ſphere, arithmetic, laws, judicial ology, ſeveral muſical inſtruments, the art of dying and of coining, joiners and carpenters trade, ſo far as to make boats and bridges. ey pretend that he never died, but that he was tranſlated alive into place which the *Chineſe* do aſſign for eternal happineſs. It is *y*'s (*m*) obſervation, that this way and cuſtom of deifying the firſt ntors of arts neceſſary to human life, is very ancient; but if it be old cuſtom, it is alſo a pregnant ſign of the ignorance that reigned ngſt thoſe ancient people that uſed it. Therefore we may as juſtly ect the hiſtory of the *Chineſe*, amongſt whom it is in uſe, as the *ptian* accounts, which were much of the ſame nature in *Alexan-* s time, as we are informed by *Diodorus Siculus*. The poſterity or ſucceſſors of thoſe famous men have always affected in proceſs of e, by ſuch means, to immortalize their names, to the end they ht raiſe up themſelves and their families as well to power and autho- , as to honour and veneration, above all other men with whom they verſed.

ut, however, we may reaſonably conjecture that thoſe ſeveral paſſages

(*m*) Lib. ii. cap. 7. Hiſt. Nat.

recorded in that hiſtory, having, for the greateſt part of them, a gre conformity with the tranſactions related in *Moſes*'s hiſtory, which was n unknown to the *Chaldeans*, with whom the *Chineſe* had communicatio and correſpondence, all thoſe pretences and claims of theirs to the in vention of theſe arts, is an honour which they have borrowed from other to lend it to the founders of their empire; juſt as the *Egyptians* hav appropriated to their firſt kings, ſome arts which were found out b the Patriarchs before the flood; or as the *Greeks* have made their fir princes the firſt inventors of thoſe very arts, the invention of which th *Egyptians* aſcribed to their firſt kings.

And this reflexion will appear the more probable and natural, if w conſider what they relate, that under the fourth ſucceſſor of *Fohius* the aroſe an impoſtor, famous by his deluſions, who endeavoured to alter th religion of the *Chineſe*, and to bring in idolatry amongſt them; whic brought great misfortunes upon *China*. For hereby it is evident, that th *Chineſe* in their hiſtory have diſguiſed, and ſo appropriated to themſelve ſome paſſages which relate to *Nimrod*'s time, ſince the original of ido latry is to be referred to the time of building of the tower of *Babe* which was intended for an idol temple, if we will believe what paſſes f a received opinion amongſt the *Jews*.

Chuenhious is ſaid to have been the reſtorer of the worſhip of one Go and to have annexed the prieſthood to the kingly power; and to hav regulated the *Calendar*; and to have found out the ephemerides of the fi planets, after an entire conjunction of thoſe five planets, before the da of the conjunction of the ſun with the moon; and to have fixed to th day, the beginning of the year, which agrees with our beginning the ye in *January*.

But yet it is to be obſerved,

1. That, notwithſtanding this pretended aſtronomical obſervatio there have been ſeveral alterations made of the beginning of the ye according to the fancy and pleaſure of ſeveral emperors, which ſhew that there was no conſtant rule obſerved in that country.

2. That *Martinius* ſeems to have approved of the calculation of th conjunction of five planets in *Aquarius*, to accommodate the falſe aſtr logical prejudice of the *Chineſe* with that of ſeveral authors, who, lookin upon the flood as a natural event, have groundleſsly imagined that it w brought to paſs by the virtue and influence of ſuch a conjunction, a that it was a certain ſign of a flood. It is this fooliſh and whimſical fan which hath made ſome *Grecians* prepoſterouſly ſedulous in ſeeking o that dreadful year, the winter whereof was to drown the world with flood, and the ſummer to burn it with a general conflagration, as *Cen rinus* * and *Ariſtotle* † have obſerved it. It is a judicious remark whi *Origanus* ‖ hath made upon the obſervations of thoſe aſtrologers wh from the conjunction of the planets in humid ſigns, uſe to foretel proc gious rains; for he ſhews that there is nothing more groundleſs and u certain than ſuch obſervations: and he gives a famous and remarkab inſtance of that uncertainty to the eternal ſhame of aſtrology, which this; *John Staffler*, as *Cardan* tells us, having obſerved ſuch a conjun

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* *Cenſ. de die nat. c.* 18.

† *Ariſt. l.* 1. *meteor. c.* 14.

‖ *Tom.* 1. *ephemer. p.* 481.

n of all the planets in *Piſces*, in the year 1524, foretold there ſhould ne a general flood; whereof ſeveral people being afraid, retired to the s of high mountains, but without any cauſe, for there was never ſeen reater ſerenity of weather.

3. *Martinius* was certainly miſtaken, when he aſcribed to *Chuenhious* regulating the *ephemerides* of the five leſſer planets; ſeeing there are ſuch *ephemerides* in *China*, according to all the relations we have of t country; nor yet any of the ſun and moon, ſo exact as we have in *rope:* a pregnant demonſtration of which is, that the miſſionary Je- ts have been raiſed up to the dignity of the chiefeſt *Mandarins* in *ina*, only becauſe their ſkill and learning in aſtrology was found to ceed that of any the moſt learned nen amongſt the *Chineſe*, by many grees.

Theſe things I thought fit to obſerve, to ſhew that there is nothing the hiſtory of *China*, which they ſo much cry up, that can any ways alidate the authority of *Moſes*'s accounts in his book of *Geneſis*, but at rather confirms it, if it be conſidered with attention.

It was not without reaſon that I have ſuppoſed that the memory of oſe ancient tranſactions was conveyed, though confuſedly, to the *Chi- e:* we have already intimated one of thoſe probable means of con- yance of this tradition, by their commerce with the *Chaldeans*, who re well informed of the greateſt part of thoſe ſeveral tranſactions, and o had great intercourſe with the remoteſt nations of *Aſia*, towards the t. To this we may add another argument, yet more certain and ſure; hich is, the continual commerce that always had been betwixt the *dies* and *China*, and the communication which the inhabitants of the ighbouring countries of the Red Sea have always had with all the ſtern nations in the world: for it is plain that this commerce gave great opportunity of communicating to thoſe eaſtern nations, the owledge of all thoſe paſſages which were known to the *Chaldeans*; juſt the like commerce with the weſtern nations of the world proved a eans of conveying to them the knowledge of the moſt part of the fame ings, which in proceſs of time became the ground of the moſt ancient oles amongſt the *Greeks*, among whom thoſe fables made up the beſt rt of their divinity.

But, beſides all this, we may mention here another very likely means conveyance, viz. the commerce of the *Chineſe* with the *Tartars*, nong whom the *Jews* of the ten tribes were diſperſed and ſettled, within hort time after their captivity in *Aſſyria*; for as thoſe *Jews* had with em the books of *Moſes*, ſo they eaſily gave a great inſight and know- dge in ancient hiſtory to thoſe nations that have appropriated it to emſelves, as may be made out by comparing their fabulous hiſtory th thoſe books of *Moſes*, which contain in effect all that relates to the iginal of thoſe nations.

But whatever judgment may be made of thoſe forementioned means conveying the ancient tradition to the *Chineſe*, I think that I have od ground to affirm,

1. That the hiſtorians that have written the lives of the firſt empe- rs of *China* were not contemporaries with thoſe emperors, and that

conſequently they have not recorded things ſo well known, as it was ſuppoſed.

2. That the fables intermixed in their hiſtories do ſufficiently evidence the eaſy and credulous temper of thoſe authors, which takes away from them all credit and belief.

3. That the greateſt care of thoſe authors was to perſuade the world of the pretended antiquity of their nation, and ſo to raiſe the honour and reputation of it by glorious ſtories and fables.

4. That their affectation, in giving us an account of aſtronomy and judiciary aſtrology, was only to bring into credit and reputation thoſe arts, the end and ſcope of which is to impoſe upon ſimple men; which is a ridiculous affectation, and ſuch as hath expoſed the *Chaldeans* and *Egyptians* to the juſt contempt and deriſion of all other nations.

5. That there is amongſt them a diverſity of opinions contrary to one another, about their antiquity; juſt as there were ſome amongſt the *Egyptians* who reckoned up 23000 years from the reign of the ſun to *Alexander*, when ſome others reckoned but a little above 10000 years.

6. That the *Chineſe*, according to one of their own opinions, muſt ſay that the earth was without almoſt any inhabitants for 30000 years together, and above: whereas we ſee that in the ſpace of five or ſix thouſand years it is become inhabited as we ſee it; and that, within a little more, it will be ſo overſtocked, as that it will not be able to yield proviſions enough for all its inhabitants, as a learned *Engliſhman* hath of late proved it by a mathematical demonſtration; wich ſhews that the *Chineſe* wanted certain grounds to go upon, in ſeveral accounts which they give of many tranſactions, and in the relating of which they are beſides moſt confident.

Laſtly, that therefore what is reported, that theſe *Chineſe* authors did all write with public allowance for every king's deceaſe, might indeed be ſo about the latter times, as it was practiſed in *Egypt*; but that it is as abſolutely falſe, that the *Chineſe* had ever in former times ſuch public hiſtorians, and as it is falſe that the *Egyptians* had formerly any ſuch, although they were as confident to ſay they had in *Alexander*'s time, as the *Chineſe* are now.

But this, I think, is ſufficient for the clearing of that matter. We muſt now anſwer the laſt objection of *Atheiſts* againſt the authority of the book of *Geneſis*.

CHAP. XXI.

Wherein the laſt Objection of Atheists *is anſwered.*

AS I intend to clear all the difficulties which may ariſe about this important matter, in the minds of thoſe that ſhall peruſe theſe obſervations; I think myſelf obliged to prevent and reſolve the only plauſible

auſible objection I know remaining, after all what I have ſaid upon is ſubject.

Perhaps ſome will be apt to reply here, that they indeed conſeſs *Moſes* be the author of *Geneſis*, and that, if that book had really been ſuppoitious, it could never have gone under his name, nor be received as s in after ages; but that yet all this does not prove ſufficiently the uth of thoſe tranſactions recorded in that book; becauſe *Moſes* may ave forced upon the people of *Iſrael* the belief of them, by thoſe laws at he enacted amongſt them, by which it was death for any man to are to conteſt the truth of any thing he had written in his books. This, think, is all that the moſt contentious *Atheiſts* can think of, to underine the authority of *Moſes*'s hiſtory.

But this objection is eaſily anſwered, for it confutes itſelf. For,

Firſt, it ſuppoſes the truth of theſe great miracles by which God tabliſhed *Moſes* the head and captain of the people of *Iſrael*; which iracles are every whit as hard to believe, as the ſeveral accounts of ther things which we read of in the book of *Geneſis*.

We find accordingly, amongſt the heathens themſelves, many monuents of thoſe miracles done by the miniſtry of *Moſes*, when he brought ne *Iſraelites* out of *Egypt*; as I intend to ſhew in my obſervations upon ne other four books of *Moſes*.

Secondly, they muſt at leaſt ſuppoſe that *Moſes* hath given a true ccount of ſeveral paſſages, in which he could not impoſe upon other ations, which did not acknowledge his authority; as, for example, all nat relates to the building of the ark, the greateſt piece of architecture hat was then in the world; and to the raiſing of the tower of *Babel*, the reateſt building that ever was, and part of which is yet extant; for all heſe things were as ſo many witneſſes of the truth of thoſe tranſactions vhich he related.

Thirdly, they muſt likewiſe ſuppoſe that he hath related ſeveral other paſſages as exactly as he did thoſe; as, for example, that of the diviſion of ongues, which is an appendix of the hiſtory of the tower of *Babel*; that f the deſtruction of *Sodom*; the original of the neighbouring nations of *Canaan*, that of the *Jews*, of the *Moabites*, of the *Ammonites*, of the *Iſhmaelites*, and *Edomites*: for it is ridiculous to conceive that this lawiver ſhould ever hope to perſuade other nations to believe any falſe tories about matters ſo well and ſo generally known as thoſe were mongſt themſelves.

Fourthly, they muſt ſuppoſe further, that he hath given a true account f the original of the *Iſraelites*, whoſe head and governor he was. How reat and abſolute ſoever the authority of *Moſes* might be, it is ridiculous o imagine that ever he would have derived the original of the *Iſraelites* rom any other than from their true anceſtors. This appears the more neceſſary, in that we ſee, by the accounts he gives of things and pedirees in *Geneſis*, that he wrote that book, eſpecially from the hiſtory of *Abraham* on to the end of it, only to ſhew the rights and juſt preenſions of the *Iſraelites* upon the land of *Canaan*.

Fifthly, they muſt yet further acknowledge, whether they will or not, he truth of the accounts he gives, concerning the original of the pretenſions and diviſions which were kept up amongſt the twelve tribes of

Iſrael: now theſe pretenſions having no other ground than the oracles which are related in his hiſtory, they ſufficiently prove the authority of thoſe oracles, againſt all the pretenſions and objections of the Atheiſts.

What violence ſoever they may pretend that *Moſes* might uſe to force an implicit belief of his hiſtory and blind obedience to his laws, yet no man of common ſenſe and reaſon can ever think that he would have filled the accounts he gives of things of that nature, with lies, or that, if he had done it, he could ever have expected that his falſe accounts of them ſhould ever have been credited by the neighbouring nations, or even by his own ſubjects.

But without urging here ſeveral other abſurdities, which plainly ſhew that there is no diſtinction to be found betwixt the accounts of things which *Moſes* recites as publicly known, and thoſe which he relates of his own head, and private knowledge; there being, as I have already ſhewed, betwixt all thoſe ſeveral accounts, ſuch a natural coherence and neceſſary concatenation, that they cannot be divided from one another, without deſtroying the whole frame of his hiſtory; I ſay, that it is impoſſible that the law by which he makes it death for any one to conteſt the truth of his narration, ſhould make the ſincerity of it ſuſpected.

I do not urge here, that there is an evident abſurdity to ſuppoſe that *Moſes* would ever have related together all thoſe tranſactions, as the grounds of religion, if they had been abſolutely unknown in the world before him.

Neither do I mention here, that ſuppoſe *Moſes* had been ſo imprudent as to attempt ſuch an undertaking, yet there is no reaſon to believe that a whole nation, and that a very numerous one, would have long perſevered in a profeſſion forced upon them by mere violence and tyranny.

Nor do I think it neceſſary to obſerve here, that the people of *Iſrael* were neither ſo patient, nor ſo eaſily perſuaded by *Moſes*, nor yet ſo ſubmiſſive to him, as theſe objectors do imagine.

That is plain, and apparent enough from all their ſeditions and conſpiracies againſt him.

Nor do I judge it neceſſary to obſerve here what is plain enough of itſelf, viz. that *Moſes* had no ſucceſſor any ways concerned to countenance and defend theſe pretended fictions and fables of his hiſtory. *Joſhua*, his immediate ſucceſſor, was of another tribe; and ſo were all the ſucceeding governors of *Iſrael*, until the *Maccabees* came.

But what I think deſerves beſt to be obſerved here, is, that after *Moſes* and *Joſhua*'s deceaſe the people of *Iſrael* was brought under the ſubjection of the *Canaanites*, and conſequently freed from the terror of that law of *Moſes*'s making, by which it was death for any one to conteſt the authority of his laws, and the truth of all his writings: there is but a little more than forty years interval betwixt the conqueſt of *Canaan* by *Joſhua*, and the bondage of the *Iſraelites* under the neigbouring nations. Had it not been a fit time then, to caſt off the yoke of *Moſes*'s laws, and to publiſh the pretended lies and impoſtures of his hiſtory? Was not the compariſon which the *Iſraelites* could eaſily make betwixt the *Moſaic* writings, and the tradition generally received in the country of their captivity, a natural and ready means to undeceive them?

Yet, notwithſtanding all this, we ſee that they obſtinately entertain the

f of the ſeveral tranſactions recorded by *Moſes*, and ſtand firmly to heir pretenſions: nay, we ſee them have recourſe to the remedy of ntance which *Moſes* preſcribed them to uſe in thoſe ſad misfortunes ch he foretold ſhould befall them, and out of which he promiſed, at ſame time, that God would miraculouſly deliver them; which in- was done accordingly, even fourteen times within leſs than four dred years, as is manifeſt from the book of *Judges*.

an there then be a more pregnant argument, that if *Moſes* made it h, by one of his ſanctions, for any of the *Iſraelites* to conteſt the h either of his writings, or of his oracles and miracles, it was not orce the belief of them without examination, but rather only to pre- the corruption of that people, and their mingling and confounding nſelves with the heathens, which God intended to hinder on purpoſe, uſe he would have the Meſſiah to be born, according to his promiſe, of that nation; which to effect, he thought fit, in his infinite wiſ-, to employ the rigour of ſome capital laws, to keep that people ixed and diſtinguiſhed from all other nations of the world, till the ſiah was born?

CHAP. XXII.

Conſequences of what we have proved in our foregoing Obſervations upon the Book of GENESIS.

THESE ſeveral obſervations which I have made upon the Book of *Geneſis*, are all, I think, very natural and eaſy; and, if I am not aken, ſufficient to prove ſolidly the truth of *Moſes*'s account, of creation of the world, and of the promiſe of the Meſſiah, which is foundation of the Chriſtian religion.

The concluſion that I draw out of the premiſes is, that,

Firſt, I aſſert, that *Moſes*, that famous *Hebrew* who was deſigned to he heir of *Pharaoh*'s daughter, is the true and ſole author of the book *Geneſis*.

Secondly, I maintain, that this being once granted, he could not, ording to his way of writing, record thoſe important tranſactions he tes, otherwiſe than they really came to paſs.

Thirdly, I maintain, that though he had not been an eye-witneſs of creation of the world, yet he hath made the deſcription of it accord- to ſuch an authentic tradition as cannot be reaſonably doubted of, auſe it was then the univerſal tradition, not only of the *Moabites*, he *Ammonites*, of the *Iſhmaelites*, and of the *Edomites*, who were all *Shem*'s poſterity; and amongſt whom he had been travelling for forty rs together; but alſo of the *Egyptians*, of his own people, and, in a d, of all men then living in the world.

Fourthly, I maintain, that he never was found fault with, nor con- icted, till true reaſon and ſenſe, if I may ſay ſo, was loſt and baniſhed from

from amongſt mankind, till the *Egyptians*, for example, they who u
before to look upon the *Greeks* as mere children and ideots, were fall
into ſo great a ſtupidity and depravation of ſenſe, as to believe a
maintain that men were firſt born in *Egypt*, becauſe, forſooth, frogs d
naturally, as they thought, breed out of their muddy fens and marſhes

Fifthly, I maintain, that for many ages after *Moſes* nobody did ev
publicly declare for the eternity of the world, nor yet for its fortuito
production. Theſe opinions are mere abſurdities and chimeras, broug
forth into the world by the *Chaldeans* and *Greeks*, only about *Alexande*
time, or perhaps an hundred years before him, *i. e.* about eleven
twelve hundred years after *Moſes*'s deceaſe.

Sixthly, I maintain, that ſeeing there is no particular time to be fou
wherein the reading of the law was interrupted and diſcontinued for a
conſiderable time amongſt the *Jews*; ſeeing it continues ſtill to this ve
hour amongſt them every ſabbath-day, in the ſeveral places of the wor
wherein they are diſperſed; and ſeeing beſides, that it is certain th
this law, which enjoins the obſervation of the ſabbath, in remembran
of the creation, could never be impoſed upon them, without their pe
ceiving and declaring preſently the novelty and ſuppoſition of that a
count, and conſequently of the book wherein it is related;—ſeeing a
this is certain, I do poſitively maintain, that the truth of the creatio
can never be better proved, than it is by the book of *Geneſis*, becauſe
it *Moſes* hath followed the tradition of all the ages that preceded hi
and only recorded in writing, what was then generally known of all m
in the world; and that, in a time when every man was able to run h
own pedigree up to *Adam*.

Laſtly, I maintain, that as the certainty of the creation cannot rea
ſonably be doubted of, without rejecting at the ſame time all tho
proofs from facts which I have brought to ſtrengthen my aſſertion,
there is all the reaſon in the world to entertain the belief of it, as a matt
of fact which is indiſputable; as being related by the moſt ancient hi
torian, confirmed by the moſt ancient tradition, believed by the mo
ancient people of the world, who did not only believe it, but alſo ha
always had, according to God's command, the memory of it celebrate
amongſt them and their anceſtors, in all their generations, fifty-tw
times in a year, from the very beginning of the world.

PREFACE

PREFACE.

WHEN I began at first these Reflexions upon the book of *Genesis*, I designed only to demonstrate the certainty of the creation of first man, and so to shew, by arguments from matters of fact, that ner the creation of the world, nor yet the promise of the Messiah, ch God made to man after his sin, can reasonably be disputed or ted of.

designed, after that, to establish the truth of Christ's resurrection, by another undeniable argument, viz. by shewing that the apostles eye-witnesses of it, and instituted a solemn day in every week to brate and perpetuate the memory of it, amongst men, from their down to the end of the world. And this I thought was sufficient monstrate the truth of the Christian religion: for as the *Jews*, by continual celebration of the sabbath every week, could easily run to the creation of the world, which was the occasion of the insti-on of the sabbath, so the Christians may, by the weekly observation he Lord's day, prove Christ's resurrection, which occasioned the in-tion of the Lord's day. If we consider the thing in itself, there is ss absurdity to dispute our Saviour's resurrection, than the creation he first man.

ow if this argument holds, as there can be no easier, so neither can e be a stronger proof of the truth of the Christian religion; for, pro-d we be once well assured of the certainty of Christ's resurrection, nust acknowledge him to be the true Messiah, and consequently em-e his religion.

ut it seems, in the heat of meditation, I was insensibly carried fur-in my observations upon the promise of the Messiah, than I thought irst to be. Therefore, instead of passing now, as I proposed in the nning, to the proof of Christ's resurrection, which is a solid and pendious way of demonstrating the truth of his religion, I find my-engaged, according to my present method, to continue to make the Reflexions upon the other Books of Holy Scripture, that I may yet e fully demonstrate that Jesus Christ is the true Messiah, whom l promised to man immediately after his sin.

nd this I intend to shew so plainly, as will make it evident that God a really accomplished his first designs, and exactly performed all his nises relating to the Messiah, according to the first ideas he gave of coming, to the ancient Patriarchs.

First

First, then, I design to trace up the method that God was pleased to use, to make the Messiah known without mistake, whenever he should come into the world.

Secondly, I will make some Reflexions upon the several notions he gave of him long before, in his oracles, to characterise his person, his offices, his actions, his sufferings, his glory, &c.

Last of all, I will shew that we have all this whole project and design exactly accomplished in the history of the Gospel, as it was written by Christ's disciples. Now, as this method which God hath particularly chosen to make the Messiah known, appears also in the other Books of *Moses*; so I think it will not be amiss for me particularly to view and examine these Books, that I may have occasion to illustrate several things in them which deserve a particular attention, especially when they are considered together, and as it were at one view.

For the prophecies being thus considered together in their connexion and progress, do more plainly evidence God's design, and may better convince or confound the *Jews*. Therefore I intend accordingly to consider those oracles with attention, and to join them together, that so they may in their conjunction cast forth the brighter beams of light, to the conviction of all infidels who may happen to peruse this book.

For I am persuaded that, after the perusal of my observations in it, an ordinary attention in the reading of the Gospel will be sufficient to convince any man that *Jesus Christ* is the true Messiah, which is all I intend to prove, as the conclusion of this Treatise.

Now as the examination of the Patriarchs religion according to the account *Moses* hath given us of it in his book of *Genesis*, hath taken up the first part of it; so I design to examine in this second part the *Israelites* religion, and to follow in my search the account which *Moses* gives of it in his other four Books.

And as, to effect this, it is very important to establish beforehand the authority of those four Books; so I intend to shew, first of all, that *Moses* is the true author of them, and that they have intrinsic characters of undeniable certainty.

Then, secondly, it will be natural for me to shew, that *Moses*, in the writing of them, had the promise of the Messiah in view, as particularly promised of God to the Patriarchs of his own nation, and as being consequently the principal, if not the sole object of their hope.

Thirdly, I intend to shew, that if we seriously examine *Moses*'s laws we shall find in them such a method observed, as is both very agreeable to the manifestation of God's design in *Genesis*, and very worthy of his wisdom, especially if we consider what he was pleased to reveal unto us, of his intentions, by the Prophets who followed *Moses*.

REFLEXIONS

UPON THE FOUR LAST

BOOKS OF MOSES,

TO

ESTABLISH THE TRUTH

OF THE

CHRISTIAN RELIGION.

CHAP. I.

That it cannot reasonably be doubted, but that MOSES *is the Author of* EXODUS, *and of the three other following Books.*

THIS is a truth which may be grounded upon several solid arguments.

I might observe, That *Moses* hath always been acknowledged, by the very heathens themselves, not only to be the most ancient historian, but also the most ancient legislator in the world.

I might likewise observe, That there is a particular connexion betwixt the book of *Genesis* and the other books of *Moses*, as well in regard of the general design of their author, as of the matters treated of in them. For example, we see that the greatest part of the laws and transactions which we find written and recorded there, derive their original from those transactions and passages that we read of in *Genesis*. Thus we may plainly discern

diſcern that the pretenſion of the *Iſraelites* upon the land of *Canaan* was grounded upon the promiſe that God made to *Abraham* to give it to his poſterity, in the fourth generation. Thus we may ſee that the *Amalekites* could have no other reaſon to make war againſt the *Iſraelites*, than the old alliance that was formerly made betwixt *Amalek* and the *Canaanites*, which without doubt engaged his poſterity to be the firſt oppoſers of the eſtabliſhment of the *Iſraelites* in the land of *Canaan*. Thus we ſee that the ſeditions of the *Iſraelites* againſt *Moſes*, under *Corah*, *Dathan*, and *Abiram*, did proceed from the order of the birth of the children of *Iſrael* as it is ſet down in *Geneſis*, becauſe the eldeſt, thinking themſelves wronged of their birthright, thought they might juſtly rebel againſt *Moſes* in order to recover it.

But I haſte to things more material than theſe. And, firſt, it is here obſervable, that thoſe books were not only religiouſly kept in every family of *Iſrael*, but that they were alſo once ſolemnly depoſited in the tabernacle as a public record, and that by *Moſes* himſelf, a little before his death, that they might be a teſtimony againſt that people, as we read it *Deuteronomy* xxxi. 26.

Secondly, it cannot be denied that *Moſes* did ſtraitly charge both *Joſhua* and the heads of the people to read them frequently and carefully, for it is expreſsly ſaid ſo, *Joſhua* i. 8. Nay, we ſee, about 500 years after, the holy man *David*, who had made, during his life, the ſupreme felicity of a man to conſiſt in the reading of the law of God day and night (*n*)—we ſee, I ſay, that holy man give on his death-bed the ſame charge to *Solomon*, I. *Kings*.

Thirdly, moreover, it is certain that there were many laws and ſanctions contained in thoſe books, which are the foundation of the hiſtory of ſucceeding times; and this is the reaſon why we read nothing in the book of *Joſhua* concerning the ſeveral bleſſings and curſes which were to be pronounced upon the mounts *Ebal* and *Gerizim*, becauſe the form of them was to be borrowed from the books of *Moſes*, which were public and authentic. The ſame reflexion may be made upon the law of the firſt-fruits, and upon the prayer which was to be made upon the tithes of the third year; as likewiſe upon many other laws.

Fourthly, it is certain that thoſe books were read over every ſeventh year, according to the injunction of that law which we find in *Deuteronomy* xxxi. 10, 11. which was commanded to be done for the inſtruction of poſterity, as it is intimated in the thirteenth *verſe* of the ſame *chapter*. Whereupon it may not be prepoſterous to conſider here God's methods, to prevent all forgery and impoſture in this matter.

We ſee that it was, during the longevity of human life, a conſtant and univerſal cuſtom amongſt all the Patriarchs, to *Moſes*'s time, to put (when they lay on their death-beds) their poſterity in mind of the moſt important truths, and of the fundamental articles of religion; becauſe, as all admonitions and exhortations made at ſuch a time are always looked upon as ſincere, ſo they ſeldom fail of being favourably conſtrued and better entertained than they would be at any other time. We have, as inſtances of this ancient cuſtom, the examples of *Abraham*, of *Iſaac*, of *Jacob*, of *Joſeph*, &c. who in that, I make no doubt, followed the cuſtom

(*n*) Pſal. i.

om of their pious ancestors, who, in all likelihood, derived it from
n himself. That custom, we see, was of an admirable use to perpe-
e the memory of illustrious transactions: what was then spoken by
e pious venerable men, was a kind of a public sermon, because it
delivered before those numerous families which met then all toge-
about the bed of their common head and father; and that, upon
an occasion as did extraordinarily excite their attention.

To this custom succeeded another, which was, that when the greatest
ains and judges of the people of *Israel* were sensible of their ap-
aching death, then they usually called the people together, to give
n such exhortations, reproofs, and admonitions, as they judged most
per, either for their encouragement, or for their reformation; nay,
that even in some occasions many of them have affected to have
r speeches made public, and deposited in the tabernacle: thus did
es and *Joshua*, and the greatest number of the Judges, and *Samuel*,
Solomon, &c.

We know that the books of *Moses* were formerly read every sabbath-
, as St. *James* doth attest it in *Acts* xv. And though there be no
ress command about it in *Moses*'s writings, yet we find there some-
ng equivalent to it, in the strict charge given by him to all the peo-
to be continually conversant in his books, and to instruct their fa-
es at all times in the laws and doctrines delivered in them; for it is
n, that if the *Israelites* were bound by that command of *Moses* to
his books every day, they were more particularly obliged, by the
e command, to read them on the sabbath-day, which was made a day
rest by God, particularly on purpose that all men might the better
nd on that day to the reading and meditating God's laws, and the
forming all other religious duties.

We know besides that those books were continually explained both by
doctors of the law, and the *Levites*, who were on purpose dispersed
ough the whole land of *Canaan*, that they might the better attend
perform the duties of their ministry.

We see that *Moses* in his writings hath exactly kept a kind of journal,
ch cannot easily receive any alteration. If we read hereupon what
tes to the sojourning of the *Israelites*, and the several removals of
r tents in the desert, we shall be easily convinced by the very form
style of those books, as we have them now, that they were formerly
licly received, and were exactly transcribed out of the original, and
, if in process of time they suffered any alteration, it was only as to
e appendixes or postscripts inserted by *Esra*, or some other Pro-
t, by way of explication.

We see in those books a history written without disguise or partiality,
ct in relating all circumstances, of places, times, and persons, even
he narration of things of small importance for the main drift of the
nor; there are, besides, some passages recorded in them, which any
nor who lived after *Moses*'s time would certainly have left out, if
no other reason, yet at least to abolish the memory of some actions
onourable to some great families, and whole tribes of *Israel*.

Again, we read in them the songs and other public monuments
which

which were made upon extraordinary occasions, to preserve the memo of them the better.

I have but three observations more to make here, and then I hav done with this chapter.

The first is, that those books have been constantly quoted by all th authors amongst that people who followed *Moses*, and that their quot tions do exactly agree with the text of those books, as we have the now; which is a certain sign, as well of the sincerity, as of the ant quity of that author. They were as much esteemed in *Israel* as in *Juda* both people did observe them as their law: the Prophets that aro from time to time, did always, and upon all occasions, acknowledge an maintain their authority.

Thus we find in the book of *Joshua*, quoted out of them, what re lates to the curses and blessings, to the prophecies, and divisions of th land of *Canaan* amongst the tribes of *Israel*. The whole history the thirteen judges whom God raised up amongst the people, is no thing, in general, but an account of the accomplishment of that pr mise which God hath formerly made to *Moses*, to raise up from amon that people such men, in the time of their afflictions and captivities, would be the assertors of their liberty.

We see there, in particular, the execution of *Moses*'s order concern ing *Caleb*, and of that law in *Deuteronomy* which prescribes the man ner of dismissing from the army those that are fearful and faint-hearte and of that other concerning the *Nazarites* (*o*), &c.

Thus we see, that the rules and laws prescribed in those books con tinued in force in the time of *Ruth*, *David*'s great grandmother, th appears plainly by their observation of those laws which enjoined th next kinsman to take to wife the widow of his deceased relation, and redeem his inheritance. As for *David* and *Solomon*, they are continual alluding to something or other delivered in those books: *Nehemi* quotes them in Chap. xiii. of his book, and that was in the year of th world 3563; and so does *Malachi* in the Chapters iv. and v. of h prophecy, in the year 3580.

The second observation, which is very material, is, that the auth of those books hath inserted in them an express prohibition of addi any thing to them, as we see it *Deuteronomy* iv. 2.

It is then impossible, seeing that the whole people of the *Jews* ha always acknowledged the Divine authority of those books, that th should ever have attempted the alteration of any thing in them.

Nay, we see, not without wonder, that after the greatest part of th ten tribes of *Israel* were transported into *Assyria*, those that were se from *Assyria* to inhabit their country, did receive that law, and th their posterity have kept it all along to this day, as uncorrupted as th *Jews*, although they continue their mortal enemies, and have been ex posed to all the changes and revolutions that can befall a nation, duri the long interval of 2400 years.

The third observation, which deserves a singular attention, is, th notwithstanding the great and many corruptions which the commo wealth of *Israel* fell into, yet these books have still been kept up in t

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(*o*) Judg. i. 20. Judg. vii. 3. Judg. xiii. 3.

ne form that we have them now: it appears out of the history of *iah*, related 2 *Kings* xxiii. 21. that after the book of the law, of *ses*'s own writing, was found in the temple, the king commanded the people to keep the passover unto the Lord, *as it is written in the k of this covenant:* now we have the institution of the passover, *Exod.* . which shews that *Josiah*, by the book of this covenant, meant the oks of *Moses*, such as we have them nowadays, and such as they were en *Moses* deposited them into the sanctuary.

t is important to consider well all that is related in the forementioned pter of II. *Kings*; for we may gather out of it that it was according the directions of this law that they began to reform all the superstiins and idolatries which had been introduced in their religion, and ntenanced by the royal authority, from *Solomon*'s time to *Josiah:* s chapter relates and commends the proceeding of *Josiah*, only in position to the ill government of his predecessors, and to the public numents of their superstitions, which he abolished in obedience to d's laws, contained in the books of *Moses*.

However, it is certain, that it was no easy matter to impose herein on posterity.

For, first, the transactions recorded in the books of *Moses* did not y relate to the people of *Israel*, but also to most of the neighbouring ions.

Secondly, the memory of them continued so lively and universal, t, almost 1500 years after *Moses*, the names of those magicians spoken *Exod.* vii. 11. were as yet known, not only amongst the *Jews*, as see it by an express passage of St. *Paul*, who speaks of them, and ntioneth their names, 2 *Tim.* iii. 8. but also among the heathens, both *Pliny* and *Numenius* do attest it (*p*).

I point only at those general proofs at present, because I have already de use of them, and shewed their force in my observations upon *Genesis*, l because I intend to repeat and improve some of them hereafter this treatise. But now, in order to follow my present design, I must ne to the more particular consideration of the things contained in se books, which will much conduce to the confirmation of the same th.

CHAP. II.

t both the Character of Moses's *Person, and the Nature of the Things he relates, have always made Men read his Books with Attention.*

THE subject of some books is such, as that alone would recommend them to the attention of any reader, though their author no reputation in the world; but when, besides the importance of

(*p*) *Hist. Nat.* l. 30. c. 1.

their ſubject, the author of them is famous and of great repute, then, to be ſure, they never fail to be read with ſerious attention, and preſerved with as great a care. The books of *Moſes* have both theſe advantages, ſo that they cannot reaſonably be ſuſpected of the leaſt alteration or forgery.

The firſt character that we diſcover in theſe books, at the firſt viewing of them, is the great ſingularity and admirable diverſity of their ſtyle, and of the matters they treat of.

We do not ſee that other legiſlators did ever affect to act the parts of hiſtorians; no, they content themſelves with their abſolute power to make laws, without giving any reaſon for the ſanction of them; therefore we ſee that there is commonly nothing more dry and ſapleſs than all their regulations, about both civil and religious matters.

But *Moſes*, we ſee, hath followed a more reaſonable and more ſatisfactory method: all his regulations are grounded upon the great tranſactions which he relates; he enacts no law of any conſequence, but he intimates to the *Jews*, at the ſame time, the reaſons which challenge their obedience, and makes them by that means reflect both upon the ſeveral mercies of God beſtowed upon them, and call to mind the great miracles they had been eye-witneſſes of.

I confeſs, indeed, that the uſe and ſcope of ſome of his regulations is very abſtruſe, eſpecially now that we are ignorant of the ſeveral heathen cuſtoms which God deſigned to aboliſh from among that people newly come out of *Egypt*, where during their captivity they had complied and accuſtomed themſelves in a great meaſure to the rites and religion of their maſters the *Egyptians*. But yet, how abſtruſe ſoever the deſign of ſome of thoſe laws may now appear to be, we have good ground to affirm, that the general ſcope of them all was, to keep that people from idolatry in diſtinguiſhing them from all other nations, as alſo to quicken their deſires and expectations of the *Meſſiah*, the promiſe of whoſe coming had been made by God in the very beginning of the world, and renewed ſeveral times to the heads of their nation.

However, we ſee in the books of thoſe laws, religion and policy ſo interwoven together, that the latter ſeems to ſubſiſt only by the ſupport and aſſiſtance of the former; which is contrary to the cuſtom of human legiſlators, who do not ſo much regard the eſtabliſhment of religion, as the preſervation and welfare of the ſtate and commonwealth.

If any *Jew* had a mind to be informed about the tradition of his anceſtors, and the tranſactions of old, *Moſes* hath preſerved it with ſuch care, with ſo many marks of fidelity, and ſo clear and plain, that there is no other hiſtory beſides his, that can give any ſatisfactory information about the original of things; all the fables of the heathens, which yet make up the moſt ancient tradition they have, being nothing elſe but a corruption and depravation of the ſeveral truths that *Moſes* relates in his hiſtory.

If any *Jew* deſired to ſee the beginnings of that commonwealth of which he was a member, *Moſes* gives an accurate account of them.

If any *Jew* deſired to know the original of mankind, or what was the true happineſs of man, and what he ought to do, in order to be a partaker

ker of that happiness, *Moses* teaches all that with great evidence and exactness.

If any *Jew* had a mind to know the occasion of those songs that were so much in fashion among those of his nation, he might easily satisfy his curiosity, by reading *Moses*'s history.

If any *Jew* desired to know what sort of exhortations they were, which the Founder both of their religion and commonwealth had formerly made to their fore-fathers, *Moses* relates a great many of them in his books.

If any *Jew* had a mind to receive instruction about the original and use of those temporal blessings he enjoyed in the land of *Canaan*, which God had possessed his nation of, after the expulsion of those people that had been the inhabitants of it for many ages, *Moses* gives a good account of all that, as can be desired.

If any *Jew* had a mind to know the original of the several calamities that befell his nation on several occasions, *Moses* acquainted them both with the cause and remedy of all their afflictions.

Lastly, if the *Jews* desired to be informed of the future condition of their commonwealth in after ages, *Moses* foretells it in so particular and clear a manner, that they might look upon his prophecies, not as certain prophecies only, but as a plain history of future events, begun and traced out before their accomplishment.

All this is so much the more considerable, to oblige us to read the books of *Moses* with care, that we may justly observe three things in his person, which as they raise him above all common authors, so they cannot but strengthen the belief, and increase the esteem and veneration, which we ought to have for his history.

The first is, that whereas all men are careful to conceal their own infirmities, and whatever is dishonourable to their families, *Moses* on the contrary seems to have affected to record all the things that could blemish the memory of his ancestors, and derogate to his own reputation. He blemishes *Jacob*'s memory, by his relating how he preferred *Joseph*, the son of his beloved wife, to *Reuben* his eldest, whom he unjustly deprived of his birthright, in favour of the other; which injustice is expressly forbidden by one of *Moses*'s laws.

Thus he lays an eternal blot and reproach upon the memory of *Levi*, the head of his own family, when he mentions his cruelty and violence against the *Sichemites*, and the dispersion of his posterity amongst the other tribes of *Israel*.

Nay, what is more, he vilifies his own birth, by forbidding any marriage betwixt an aunt and her nephew, seeing he relates that he himself was born of *Jocabed*, both aunt and wife to his father *Amram*; he describes his own incredulity with all the ingenuity imaginable, when he presents the several miracles which God wrought by him; he seems to speak of himself, only to lay open his own failings and sins. Such a sincerity and impartiality, we know, confirms and increases mightily the authority of any author.

The second thing is, that *Moses*, not regarding the advantage and honour of his own family, left the government of *Israel* to *Joshua*, one of the tribe of *Ephraim*, and so reduced his own children and their poste-

rity to the low condition of the reſt of the *Levites*, who were of an inferior rank to that of prieſts; for we do not ſee that they ever after renewed the pretenſions which they might otherwiſe have had to ſucceed *Moſes*. Now, ſuch neglect of his family ſhews that *Moſes*'s principles were raiſed much above the ordinary pitch of the generality of lawgivers, who were abſolute and ſupreme over their people.

The third thing obſervable here is, that *Moſes* had no ſhare in the conqueſt of the land of *Canaan*; it all was ſubdued after his death: nay, it was that conqueſt that fixed and ſettled the commonwealth of *Iſrael*, which was before unſettled, and as it were ambulatory in the deſert. Now, how could ſuch a ſingular deſign, as *Moſes* deſcribes in his law, be put in execution by any other than by him that formed it? It was *Joſhua* that made this conqueſt of the land of *Canaan*, and poſſeſſed the *Jews* of it. Now, to be ſure, if that people had not been then fully perſuaded of the Divine authority of *Moſes*'s law, they would never have failed, after ſo great an alteration, to make uſe of their power and liberty in throwing off the troubleſome yoke of his laws; nor yet would *Joſhua*, and all his ſucceſſors in the government, ever have maintained the authority of thoſe laws, if they had not looked upon *Moſes*, not only as an extraordinary man, but alſo as one particularly commiſſionated by God to make that body of laws for the regulating of his people.

We read, in thoſe books, of *Moſes*'s dying in the mountains of *Moab*: now, that being ſuppoſed, how is it poſſible, that if the people of *Iſrael* had not been fully convinced that God himſelf gave their law to *Moſes* with all the circumſtances mentioned by him, they would have continued to keep up ſuch a ridiculous and ill-grounded conceit? If he had really by his tyrannical authority forced the *Iſraelites* into a compliance to his laws during his life, why did they not, as ſoon as he was dead, with the fear of his authority, ſhake off the yoke of his laws, and all reſpect for his memory?

One thing we may remark as very ſurpriſing in the relation of that legiſlator's death, which is, that his body was not found after his death.

For we do not ſee that that people, which otherwiſe kept up and carried about with ſo much care, the bones of *Joſeph* and his brethren, in order to bury and depoſit them in the ſepulchres of their anceſtors (for both *Joſeph* and his brethren were interred in *Judea*), did ever build a tomb to their law-giver, or ſo much as pretend to ſhew his ſepulchre.

Joſephus was of opinion that *Moſes* wrote himſelf the account of his own death, for fear the *Jews* ſhould ever imagine, and ſo give out, that God had taken him up into heaven. I ſee, I confeſs, no ſolidity in that conjecture of his; but yet it may give us occaſion to make a reflexion hereupon, I think, more natural and eaſy, which is, that God had a mind, as *Joſhua* intimates it, to confirm the many characters of divinity that appeared in the law of *Moſes*, by taking away from before the eyes of the *Jews* his corpſe, which they would certainly, if they had not been ſo prevented, have kept with more care than thoſe of all their patriarchs and kings. The deſcription of the manner of *Moſes*'s death, ſhews evidently that he was not only in great eſteem during his life, but that

even

n his death did much conduce to the increase of it, and to make men k upon him as one gloriously raised up above the common condition men, and in a manner not obnoxious to the infirmities and miseries ident to human nature. But after these general reflexions, I must ne to those that are more particular.

CHAP. III.

at the Truth of the Miracles related by MOSES *cannot reasonably be doubted of.*

WHOEVER will examine with attention the four last books of *Moses*, shall find in them several passages recorded, which erve a particular consideration.

As, first of all, the miraculous birth, the extraordinary education, heroical courage, and the Divine call and commission of *Moses*, and several miracles which he wrought in *Egypt*, to bring the *Israelites* t of it, and lead them to the borders of *Canaan*.

Then, secondly, all the moral, ceremonial, and political laws, which *loses* gave to that people from God.

And, lastly, *Moses*'s prophecies concerning their future condition, eir victories, their captivities, their transportations, concerning the struction of *Jerusalem*, the coming of the *Messiah*, and the dispersion their whole nation,

All which passages have as evident and authentic proofs of their certainty, as things of that nature are capable of.

Let us first begin with the narration of the miracles recorded in the ginning of *Exodus*.

Wherein we see, that after *Moses* had represented the death of *Joseph*, d of all the generation that came down with *Jacob* into *Egypt*, he ites his own history, and represents himself as another *Noah*, saved t of the waters, to save and deliver that holy family.

The whole relation which he makes of all those particulars, is very ange and extraordinary; but yet his circumcision, and the instruction his mother, to whom he was given by the daughter of *Pharaoh*, to nursed up; and the conversation of that princess, who had adopted m, and made herself a proselyte, as the *Jews* endeavour to prove om 1 *Chron.* iv. 18 (*q*); and his education in the court of *Egypt*, and s acquaintance with all the grandees of that court; did concur together acquaint him with that remarkable preservation of his person, and rsuade him of the certainty of it.

For how could *Moses* either impose, or be imposed upon, in that matr? Was not that barbarous cruelty of the *Egyptians* by which they mpelled the *Jews*, about the time of *Moses*'s birth, to throw their chil-

 dren

(*q*) *Talk.* in h. l. *ex Vajikra Rab.*

dren into the river *Nilus*, notoriouſly known of all men? Were not the public buildings, and ſtrong cities, viz. *Pythom* and *Rameſes*, ſo called from the name of king *Rameſes Miamum*, ſtanding in the ſight of all men? And was it not publicly known by all the world, that the poor *Iſraelites* were the ſlaves and drudges who were made uſe of to erect thoſe buildings?

Neither could the manner of his education be unknown to him, nor yet to any of the *Hebrews*; for we do not join here to *Moſes*'s narration, what *Joſephus* relates of his perſon, of his feats in *Meroe*, and of his marrying an *Æthiopian* princeſs, &c.

As *Moſes*'s miracles were done in the preſence of the *Egyptians* and *Jews*, ſo they teſtify that he had really received his calling and commiſſion from God in the deſert; and that, juſt in the manner as he deſcribes it himſelf.

Now, no man can diſpute the truth of thoſe miracles, if he but minds the following conſiderations.

Firſt, it cannot be denied that the people of *Iſrael* was brought out of *Egypt* by *Moſes*. Their law, which the preſent *Jews* do ſtill obſerve, ſpeaks every where of that famous action of his; there was never any man diſputed the certainty of that achievement. All ancient authors make mention of it; *Manethon* (*r*) gives an account of the time, of the manner, and of many other principal circumſtances of that exploit.

Trogus Pompeius, *Juſtinus*, and *Tacitus*, do alſo ſpeak of it. Only *Tacitus* does groundleſsly, I ſuppoſe, of his own head, relate, that the *Jews* were expelled out of *Egypt*, becauſe of their leproſy: I ſay groundleſsly, for it is known that on the contrary leproſy was a common diſtemper amongſt the *Egyptians*, and that they infected the *Iſraelites* with it; ſo that there is no likelihood they ſhould be expelled by the *Egyptians* for a diſtemper that they got from them.

We know, beſides, that the law of *Moſes* which calls the leproſy the diſtemper of *Egypt*, did baniſh the lepers out of the congregation of the people; and then the nature of *David*'s curſes againſt *Joab*, becauſe of his murdering *Abner*, ſhews ſufficiently that the leproſy was looked upon by the *Jews* as a diſtemper moſt commonly ſent immediately from God. Nay, *Trogus Pompeius* (*s*) himſelf obſerves that the magicians cauſed *Moſes*, with the people of *Iſrael*, to be expelled, becauſe they themſelves were ſtruck with a kind of ſcab and itch; and that they were afraid leſt the contagion of it ſhould infect the whole kingdom of *Egypt* (*t*).

And here I muſt not forget the mentioning the teſtimony of *Numenius*, a *Pythagorean* philoſopher, who relates that both *Jannes* and *Jambres* were choſen by the *Egyptians*, to oppoſe *Moſes*, and hinder the effects of his miracles and prayers, which had brought down many grievous plagues upon *Egypt*, juſt about the time of the *Jews* baniſhment out of that country.

But ſecondly, if the leproſy which the *Iſraelites* brought from *Egypt*, be

(*r*) *Joſeph contra App.* l. 1. (*s*) *Juſtin.* l. 36.
(*t*) *Euſeb. præp. Evang.* l. 9. c. 8.

n indiſputable proof of their ſojourning there; it is as certain, that going out of that mixed multitude of *Egyptians*, who ſo far eſpouſed *Iſraelites* intereſt, as to leave and forſake *Egypt*, their own country, to ompany them, could have no other cauſe or pretence than the mira- of *Moſes*, whereof they had been eye-witneſſes; ſo that the poſ- ty of thoſe *Egyptians* that were thus incorporated into the body of people of *Iſrael*, were in after ages as ſo many witneſſes of the truth thoſe miracles which formerly perſuaded their fathers to join with ſes, and ſo to ſhare fortune with the *Hebrews*.

Thirdly, it is certain, that the *Jews* could not ſo much as mention of the miracles which they pretended were done formerly for the iverance of their fathers, without expoſing themſelves to the ſcorn of the world, if all thoſe miracles, and their deliverance, had not been tainly and generally known to the *Egyptians*, and to all the neighbour- nations, by whom they were often ſubdued and brought into ſub- ion after the deceaſe of *Moſes* and *Joſhua*.

To all theſe reflexions we may add, that the commemoration of the aelites going out of *Egypt*, with all the miracles wrought by *Moſes*, s renewed yearly, not only by the ſolemnizing the feaſt of the paſſ- r, which the *Iſraelites* did conſtantly keep to the time of their diſ- ſion, and which they do ſtill keep in all parts of the world, but alſo two very ſenſible ways.

The firſt whereof, was the ſeparation which God made of the tribe of vi, in order to conſecrate it to his ſervice, inſtead of the firſt-born of people of *Iſrael*, whom he had ſpared and preſerved in *Egypt*, with at ſolemnity, in regard both of men and beaſts, as we read, *Numb.* ſo that every *Levite* was as a living memorial of that great miracle, ought at the *Iſraelites* going out of *Egypt*.

And the ſecond was the law concerning the redemption of every firſt- rn, both of men and unclean beaſts (*u*); which is obſerved to this ır among the *Jews*. It is clear and evident, that there is in all thoſe vs, a deep impreſſion of thoſe ſeveral great miracles which compelled araoh to let the *Iſraelites* go.

Laſtly, it is very obſervable here, that the memory of the deliverance *Iſrael* out of *Egypt*, wrought, as by many miracles, ſo eſpecially by death of the firſt-born of *Egypt*, which was the occaſion of the in- ution of the paſſover, continued amongſt the *Egyptians* till after Jeſus riſt: for till then they uſed to mark with red their ſheep, their trees, ir houſes, and lands, the day before the paſſover, as any one may ſee *Epiphanius*; which cuſtom could proceed from no other cauſe, than m the *Egyptians* fear of the like plague and mortality that was once licted upon their forefathers, and from their hope of preventing it by h a kind of taliſman whereby they thought *Moſes* had formerly ſaved *Iſraelites* harmleſs from that great plague, only by ſprinkling the blood the lamb of the paſſover on the upper door-poſt of their houſes.

(*u*) Numb. xviii. 16.

CHAP. IV.

A Continuation of the Proofs of the Truth of the Miracles wrought by MOSES.

THESE arguments might be thought sufficient for the evincing the truth of these miracles which *Moses* relates; but yet something more may be added.

As those stupendous miracles by which the famous deliverance of the *Israelites* was effected, could not be doubted of by those who had been eye-witnesses of them; so they were afterwards confirmed by several other miracles, which, being as great, and almost of the same kind, continued for many years in the sight of the whole people of *Israel*.

God made a pillar of fire, and of a cloud, attend upon the *Israelites*, to guide them, the one by day, and the other by night. He divided the Red Sea, to open a passage through it for his people; the memory whereof (saith *Eusebius*) was preserved to his time, by those of *Memphis* (*x*): the *Israelites* took the spoils of the *Egyptians* drowned in the Red Sea, as they were pursuing them: they made a song upon the occasion of that wonderful deliverance; they were fed with *manna*, a kind of heavenly and miraculous food; they drank of that brook of water that was following them wherever they went. All those miracles, with many others, continued for forty years together without any interruption, and do therefore firmly establish the truth of those other miracles which *Moses* relates, because there were none of them wherein the people could be imposed upon by any trick or illusion, and of the truth whereof every one could not satisfy himself, by his own experience.

I do not speak now of several public monuments of those miracles; as, for example, the rod of *Aaron* which blossomed in a night; the manna which was kept in the tabernacle; the brazen serpent, which, having continued to *Hezekiah*'s time, was broken down by him, only because the people offered incense to it.

From all which it must be acknowledged, that there was in the whole series of the *Jewish* history, both many pregnant evidences of the truth of the first miracles, and a constant series of miracles which, having been foretold by *Moses*, did the better confirm the truth of those which he relates as done by him on purpose to vindicate and defend the liberty and honour of the people of *Israel*.

Because I did just now intimate that the memory of the *Jewish* deliverance did continue for many ages after amongst the *Egyptians*, I think myself obliged to add here some arguments, to prove that neither such a transaction as that was, nor yet any of the like nature and importance, could ever be forgotten in the land of *Canaan*.

There is nothing that in outward appearance seems more ridiculous, than what is related concerning the *Gibeonites* coming to *Joshua*'s camp; their equipage shewed that they had a mind to persuade the *Israelites* that they

(*x*) L. 9. *præp. Ev. cap. ult.*

came from a far country. The treaty which they extorted from *a* by fraud, is very singular.

nd there can be nothing more remarkable than their subsistence ngst the people of *Israel*, notwithstanding that they were of the ber of those nations which God had commanded to be destroyed; their being destined, by *Joshua*'s appointment, to carry the wood the water necessary for the service of the tabernacle, from whence were denominated *Nethinims*, and thereby for ever after distinguished the *Israelites*.

ut after all, there could be nothing more agreeable to God's wisdom, the preservation of that people amongst the *Israelites*. Their fathers the witnesses of *Moses* and *Joshua*'s miracles. Those miracles ged them to seek the alliance of the *Hebrews*, and to cheat them into a fraudulent treaty, because they despaired of compassing their de- by any other means. Therefore their subsisting amongst the *Jews*, their servile office which exposed them to the eyes of the whole on, could not choose but be of an extraordinary use, to make that le preserve and cherish up the memory of those glorious actions ch every *Gibeonite* had perpetually before his eyes.

The same remark may be made upon the continuing of *Rahab*'s family ngst the *Israelites*, after the destruction of *Jericho*.

is certain that the *Jews* have always believed, that, besides those miracles related by *Moses*, many others have been done since for r sakes, both to possess them of the land of *Canaan*, and to keep or re them to the possession of it: nay, of those latter miracles many very like unto the former; as, for example, the death of 185000 men ie army of *Sennacherib*; the returning of the shadow backwards ten ees upon the sun-dial of *Ahaz*; the wonderful preservation of the le nation by the means of *Esther*, which was the occasion of the insti- on of the feast of *Purim* amongst them; and several other miraculous factions related in the *Jewish* authors, of which I will only name e, which did preserve the memory of the greatest and most important acles related by *Moses*.

The first is the continual miracle of the *Urim* and *Thummim* of the -priest, which by its frequency did confirm the truth of *Moses*'s ion concerning the several apparitions of God, in order to lead his ple, and to give them laws.

The second is the miracle of every seventh year (*y*), during which, igh the people of *Israel* did neither sow nor reap, God, according to promise, did supply them with plenty of provisions, by making every year extraordinarily plentiful. Now this miracle was a kind of a norial of that other great miracle whereby God did feed his people manna for forty years together in the desert, still doubling the portion of manna every sixth day.

effect, as that law which commanded a sabbath of rest unto the every seventh year, was constantly observed, which would never been done long if that people had not always been fully convinced, heir own experience, of its divinity; and again, as that miracle was ublicly known, that God by his Prophets did often threaten the

Jews

(*y*) Levit. xxv.

Jews to deprive them of the fertility of the ſixth year, becauſe of the tranſgreſſing the ſabbath; ſo it is plain, that no man can reaſonabl doubt, or diſpute the truth of that continual miracle which that la both ſuppoſeth and promiſeth.

The third is the miracle of a continual protection during the time o thoſe great ſolemn feaſts in which the people were obliged by God command to attend his ſervice in the tabernacle or at *Jeruſalem*. For th law requiring attendance from all the *Jews* of the age of twenty and up wards, it engaged them to leave the frontiers of their country nake and deſtitute of men, and ſo expoſed to the inroads of their enemies but at the ſame time it gave them occaſion to experience the ſame Divin protection which, as they had read in *Moſes*'s writings, their father had formerly ſo often experienced againſt all their enemies.

It is certain that there was never any commonwealth in the worl which had any ſuch fundamental law; the danger to which a countr is expoſed by the obſervation of it, is too viſible not to be avoided Therefore the *Jews*, to be ſure, would never have acknowledged tha law to be Divine, nor yet ſubmitted to it, if they had not been ſecur of God's protection to prevent all the miſchiefs and inconvenience that might ariſe from their obſervation of that law: ſo that, ſuppoſe the had been at firſt ſo ſtupid and unwary as to receive it from *Moſes*, ye they would never have obſerved it ſo conſtantly and ſo long, if they ha not had a conſtant trial of God's protection on all occaſions, and if the had not looked upon it as a neceſſary conſequence and accompliſhmen of the promiſes which he had made both to them and their fathers.

However, it is certain, that it was the will of God that the *Jew* ſhould altogether rely upon that miraculous protection of his: nay, th diſtruſting of it was ſo offenſive to him, that he inflicted an exemplary puniſhment upon *David*, for an action which, thought innocent of itſel in a prince, did yet directly contradict that truſt which the *Iſraelite* were bound to ſet upon God's protection; for when *David* cauſed the people to be numbered, God ſent a peſtilence amongſt his people, which abated his pride, and thus taught him effectually to rely more upon God for the future, than upon the multitude of his people.

CHAP. V.

That MOSES's *Deſcription of the Manner of God's giving him his Laws is evidently true.*

IT is alſo equally eaſy to ſhew the truth of *Moſes*'s deſcription of the manner of the promulgation of God's law in the deſert, and of the ſeveral parts of it, moral, political, ceremonial.

I ſhall not ſtand to conſider here the admirable equity, and moſt abſolute perfection of the moral law, and ſhew that it could have no other author

r but God alone; neither will I urge, in this place, the extra-
ıry care God had to regulate the most minute ceremonies, that
might be nothing left undetermined in all the acts of religion; as
he great and Divine wisdom that is discernible in all those cere-
l laws, which, besides their useful opposition to the then *Pagan*
ns, do most of them either mind men of their duty, or represent
ynify the things that were to come to pass under the Gospel.
short, I will not aggravate any farther the consideration of the ad-
le wisdom that appears every where in the whole body of the poli-
aws which God gave to the *Jews*, to settle them into a firm and
form of government; that wisdom is such, and so visible, that it
y demonstrates the divinity of them to any man that will but com-
he whole body of them, and their absolute perfection, with the
s of all human laws, and the several changes and alterations they
received from time to time.

t I shall lay aside these remarks, and choose to come to those that
t require so much learning, nor so great an intention of thought.
e first of which is, that the moral law was given in the sight and
ıg of all the people of *Israel*, and that the promulgation of it, upon
t *Sinai*, was accompanied with extraordinary marks of glory, and
only after many previous purifications prescribed to the whole
egation in order to receive it.

s true, indeed, the ceremonial laws which were annexed to it, were
elivered to the people with so much pomp and majesty; but as
were also given in the same desert, and in the presence of the elders
people assembled together near the tabernacle, after they had ear-
intreated *Moses* that God would no more speak to them himself,
vident that they are no less authentic than the moral law: there-
ve see that they were accordingly received by that people, notwith-
ng the troubles, expences, avocations, straights, and hardships,
ı they might meet with by it.

ow is it in the least probable, that if this people had not been con-
d that *Moses* did really familiarly converse with God for forty days
orty nights upon mount *Sinai*, they would foolishly, without any
, of a sudden have submitted to such a troublesome yoke of laws,
whereof were opposite both to their opinions and ancient customs?
is well known, for example, what jealousy there was all along
gst the tribes of *Israel*, even from the time of their ancestors; yet we
t see that in those laws there is any notice taken of it, or regard
o it, but that on the contrary they seem to foment that spirit of
on, when they deprive *Reuben* of his birthright, in favour of *Joseph*'s
ity, and of the priesthood in favour of *Levi*, and of the kingdom in
r of *Judah*.

y, we see, that even after *Moses* had composed the difference that
nce betwixt the tribe of *Levi* and the followers of *Corah*, *Dathan*,
biram, they were hardly brought to acquiesce to his decision; and
could he then possibly have raised his own tribe, the tribe of *Levi*,
h prerogatives, and to such a plentiful condition above all the other
, as he did, by assigning the first fruits and offerings to the Levites
and

and prieſts—how could he, I ſay, have done that without meeting wit ſome oppoſition from the reſt of the people, except they had all bee convinced, by the miracle that God wrought to decide that queſtion when it was diſputed, that he himſelf was the author of that conſtitution

Thus we read, that long after, when king *Uzziah* boldly preſume to act againſt *Moſes*'s law, *Numb.* xxv. and to aſſume himſelf th dignity of prieſthood, and to do the functions of it, he preſently receive the puniſhment due to his preſumption; ſo that, being ſtruck with a ſud den leproſy, he was confined to his dying day. Is it any ways probabl that a prince, eſpecially of his temper, would have ſubmitted to ſuch confinement, and meekly reſigned his crown to his ſon, if that puniſh ment inflicted upon him had not fully convinced him of the divinity o that law which he had tranſgreſſed and violated by his temerity an preſumption?

The third reflexion is, that the greateſt part of thoſe laws being in tended by God to inſpire his people with an irreconcilable averſio againſt all thoſe nations amongſt whom they were going to ſettle, the were ſo framed, as not only to be oppoſite to the laws and cuſtoms o *Egypt*, from whence they came, but alſo to thoſe received amongſt th *Hivites*, *Ammorites*, and other nations, of whoſe countries they wer going to poſſeſs themſelves.

Thus we find in the xviiith of *Leviticus*, laws againſt all inceſtuou marriages, which, without doubt, were ordinary amongſt the *Canaanit* and *Egyptians*, who therein followed the examples of the ancient Pa triarchs, who married within thoſe forbidden degrees: there we find alſ the ſacrifices to *Moloch* forbidden, the practice whereof, thoſe nations in all likelihood, defended by the example of *Abraham*'s ſacrifice.

Now, it cannot reaſonably be thought that a whole nation woul of a ſudden receive ſuch laws as deprived them of a liberty and freedo they had always hitherto enjoyed, and condemn of their own accor thoſe ſacrifices that had the faireſt pretence of religion imaginable, an to uſe many ceremonies contrary to thoſe received amongſt them, if the had not a ſtrong and extraordinary motive for ſo doing.

There is another thing, beſides, that challenges our conſideration, vi the exact deſcription which God gave to *Moſes* of the tabernacle, of th ſeveral parts of the ceremonial worſhip which was to be performed i that ſacred place, and of the manner how this tabernacle, with all it appurtenances, utenſils, and ornaments, was finiſhed.

For as this tabernacle was then the center of the whole *Jewiſh* religion (as the temple was afterwards by ſucceding to it) ſo it was a ſolem proof of the divinity of *Moſes*'s laws, and of the worſhip that was per formed there.

Is it conceivable, that a whole nation ſhould contribute to the build ing of it, ſhould ſee it conſecrated, and taken to pieces, and ſet togethe again every day, and ſhould read all the particulars relating to its con ſtruction, and not diſcern whether there was any truth and reality in al that was told them concerning the religion which their governor fixe in that place wherein he pretended many revelations were made?

CHAP. VI

CHAP. VI.

Other Proofs that confirm MOSES's *Description of the Manner how the Law was given and promulgated.*

UT if it is so easy to establishthe divinity of the Law of *Moses*, by shewing the truth of the matter offact, according to the er of God's promulgation, as *Moses* relates it, we may further t the truth of it, by joining these following reflexions to those y made in the foregoing chapters.

rtainly if *Moses* had been the first founder of a kingdom, and had succeeded in it by his own children and posterity for many gene- s one after another, we might perhaps have had some grounds pect that his successors, consulting their own interest and honour, l have been very glad to persuade their subjects, that the first er of their kingdom had some communication with God, and that s from him he received the laws and constitutions which he gave concerning civil and religious matters.

t it is observable, that *Moses* was so far from investing his own en with the supreme authority after himself, that he translated it nother tribe, and constituted *Joshua*, of the tribe of *Ephraim*, for ccessor in the government: as for his posterity, he took little care but reduced it to a rank inferior to that of *Aaron*'s family, which eferred to the most honourable functions of the priesthood, leaving own the meanest and most inconsiderable employments: all which evidently that none of those who came after *Moses* were moved, by rivate interest of their own, to defend the truth and authority of ws and writings, but only by the certain knowledge they had, hey were all divine.

ither ought we to omit to consider here the manner how *Moses* de- beforehand such questions, and determines such controversies, as not be raised but after the conquest of *Canaan*, which was made is successor only after his death; and how those laws were con- y observed in all the succeeding generations of that people, and sub- d unto by the very judges and kings themselves; though there be ng more common than for a conqueror, such as *Joshua* was, to : of no other fundamental laws in that state he is the founder of, those which he is the author of. Nothing is more usual, than for men to affect the exposing the conduct of their predecessors, espe- when the form of government is altered, and from democratical, stocratical, is changed into monarchical, as it happened amongst *raelites*. How then could *Moses*'s laws still keep up their autho- n all changes and revolutions? How comes it to pass, that in all ccessions of judges and kings, there was never any of them at- ted to suspend or annul *Moses*'s laws, much less to enact and give thers contrary to them?

Again, how came it to pass, that, in all the divisions and factions t nation fell into, there was never any *Jew* endeavoured, with any succ to undeceive the rest of his own people, so as to make them shake off troublesome yoke of *Moses*'s laws? No doubt, only because the general of that nation never disputed the divine origin and authority of them

It were an easy thing to demonstrate, by the whole series of the *Jew* history, that all those laws which in *Moses*'s writings are inlayed within another, and represented as occasioned by several transactions lated there, have all been equally received of the *Jews*, and have all b put together in a body by themselves before *Moses*'s death, as it may proved out of the xxxist of *Deuteronomy*.

It appears, that those laws were public, and in great esteem amon that people to whom God gave them, upon whom he laid an indispe sable obligation to read them every day, and to consult them upon eve emergent business.

It appears, that they were known equally of all degrees of men, sex and ages, which were all obliged to pay obedience to them upon p of death.

It appears, that those laws were not only publicly kept in the tab nacle, but also privately read in every family.

We see that a whole tribe, viz. the tribe of *Levi*, was appointed God to explain them; and in order to that, they were dispersed throu out the whole land of *Canaan*, and exempted from the cares and troub that necessarily attend husbandry, by the plentiful provision of tit and offerings that was allotted to them.

We see that God obliged all *Jews* to read and meditate upon th continually, especially every sabbath-day.

Nay, and we see moreover, that God every seventh year would h them read publicly in a more solemn manner, before the whole cong gation of that people, who during that year were obliged to rest fr all their ordinary labours and employments, and so had nothing els do, all that while, but to read the law, to examine it, and to medit upon it.

Lastly, it appears, that those laws were yet the more solemn and a thentic, because they obliged the *Jews* to celebrate three such feasts were to be publicly kept by the whole nation, and consequently apt refresh their memories, and put them in mind, thrice a year, not o of the surprising miracles that God had done them, but also of t manner how he gave and promulgated his laws; the miracles giving r to the laws, and those laws being themselves a means of preserving t memory of those miracles, because of the frequent commemoration them which was therein enjoined.

Now these things being so, let every one judge, whether the truth *Moses*'s account of God's giving, and promulgating by his means, t body of laws which he hath inserted in *Exodus*, and the following boo can possibly, or at least reasonably, be disputed, or doubted of. Bu come now to consider the oracles recorded in *Moses*'s writings, in or to demonstrate the truth and divinity of them.

CHAP. V

CHAP. VII.

here is no just Exception can be against MOSES's *History, in what relates to the Oracles which he hath recorded in his Books.*

HERE are several sorts of Oracles in *Exodus*, and the other three following Books.

t, there are some whereof the accomplishment did soon follow the tion.

e deliverance of the *Jews* out of the *Egyptian* bondage is of that r; *Moses* does promise and foretel it; nay, and he executed it f: and all the people to whom it was promised and foretold, were lves witnesses of the accomplishment of that prophecy; and it nat accomplishment which established the divinity of his com- n.

is the other prophecy concerning the conquest of the land of *Ca-* and the several divisions that were to be made of it amongst all the of *Israel*, *Moses* foretelling exactly what lot every one should have, ving, besides, a description of the country that every tribe was to t.

ose that were born in the desert were witnesses both of the pre- and the execution of it, although it was by the casting of lots l the tribes got their several partitions.

, secondly, there are some other oracles in *Moses*'s books, the ac- ishment whereof was not to follow the prediction till after a long al of time.

h are the prophecies that foretel the future subjection of the *Israel-* the *Canaanites*, and the several deliverances out of that subjection, God was to effect by the hands of *judges*, whom he was to raise that purpose.

h again are the prophecies which relate to the future change of ommonwealth into a kingly government.

irdly, and lastly, we see that *Moses* foretells all the accidents, es, and revolutions, that were to befall the *Jews*, as long as their hould stand: at least, we see that his predictions are very plain, ning their several captivities and removals, and their return into ly land; as also the sieges of *Samaria* and *Jerusalem*; and the erable dispersion of the whole nation, which we see at present. whatever difference there may otherwise be betwixt all these pre- s, we may say, that every one of them hath as pregnant proofs certainty and truth, as any thing of that nature is capable of.

first, as to the first sort of predictions, the accomplishment whereof relates himself,

ainly appears, that his account cannot in the least be suspected osture; because he wrote it amongst a whole nation, which could ssibly be imposed upon in that case, seeing he supposes, and takes it

it for granted, all along in his relation, that those predictions were b
forehand publicly and generally known of all the people.

As for the accomplishment of the second sort of propeecies, we ha
the relation of it in such other books as were written after *Moses*'s deat
as in the books of *Joshua*, of *Judges*, and several others, which rela
the accomplishment of them, as of prophecies written many years, a
even some ages before, by *Moses*.

Besides, to this we may add, that the account which we find in tho
books, concerning the accomplishment of *Moses*'s prophecies, is inte
woven with such histories as suppose, without any affectation, that h
prophecies, as well as his writings, were in the hands of all the worl
and distinctly known by every *Jew*.

And what is further observable, is, that the *Jews* have always ha
Moses's books in such an esteem, because of these several illustrio
prophecies that are contained in them, that they have always looked upo
him as the most excellent of all their prophets. They assert, this ve
day, that the other prophets had commonly no other knowledge of futu
events than that which was communicated to them by dreams and v
sions; whereas *Moses* had it by an immediate revelation of God himsel
who used to speak to him face to face, without any enthusiasm, when
was perfectly awake.

Now, how could ever the *Jews* have been so strongly prepossessed
that high opinion both of *Moses* and his predictions, if we suppose th
they never saw the accomplishment of any of them?

That would certainly be as strange an illusion as ever was: for it
besides observable, that those prophecies of his were not written b
themselves, and kept secret from the generality of the people; but th
they were inserted into the several speeches which he made to all th
people some time before his death; and which are written, and ke
together in the same volume, to be a standing monument, both of h
prophecies, and of his ministry among the *Jews*.

Now there is a vast difference betwixt a book that is all made up
prophecies, and so kept secret, and seldom read, as the books of th
Sybils were, and a book wherein the prophecies it contains are inte
woven with a history wherein there is so great a variety of matters,
draws to it and fixes the attention of every reader, and wherein th
are mingled with a whole body of political and ceremonial laws, a
intermixed with the accounts which *Moses* gives of all the great tran
actions which gave the occasion to so many several revelations and pr
phecies recorded in his books.

I am persuaded that it is impossible for any man to make those re
flexions upon the opinion which the *Jews* entertained of *Moses*'s prer
gative, and upon the manner that his prophecies, so much reverence
amongst them, were exactly accomplished, and not be convinced of the
Divine authority.

CHAP. VII

CHAP. VIII.

The Testimony of the JEWS *is a constant Proof of the Truth of the Oracles related by* MOSES.

T lest any body should think it strange that I should build the ruth of *Moses*'s prophecies upon the testimony of the *Jews*, I will n its authority of it within just and certain bounds.
t, although the *Jews* bear witness, in their sacred books, that the st part of *Moses*'s prophecies are already fulfilled, yet they say some t; as, for instance, those which relate to the Messiah's coming. eir obstinate blindness is not a just prejudice against such an impor- ruth; to be convinced of which, we need only to compare *Moses*'s with the actions of Jesus Christ.
us, for what relates to the destruction of *Jerusalem*, we need only re *Moses*'s prophecy of it, with the description *Josephus*, their own an, hath made of the same in his history of the siege and ruin of ty, and of the dissipation of all the nations of the *Jews*.
without the *Jews* testimony, in what regards the accomplishment se prophecies whereof the execution was deferred for a very long it is easy to convince any the most incredulous man of their truth vinity, if he please but to make this one reflexion, which is, that *Moses* relates amongst the oracles of the Patriarch *Jacob*, a parti- prophecy concerning the Messiah's coming, and when he mentions f *Balaam* concerning the rising of that Divine star, he subjoins also same time that concerning the vocation of the Gentiles to the faith, ings it in as a certain sign and consequence of the Messiah's being nto the world.
w, if we examine the meaning of *Moses*'s predictions about the on of the Gentiles, which the Prophets that came after him did explain and illustrate, we shall be apt from thence to conclude, e in effect foretold that God in the days of the Messiah would quite another method than that which he had used before until ne of *Moses*, viz.
t whereas God might seem to restrain then the privilege of his ant, to one people alone; which was in effect to restrain the ho- f the Messiah's birth to one sole nation of the world, to one sole f that nation, to one sole family of that tribe, to one sole branch family, and so to one sole person of that branch; he would (after essiah's coming) take a contrary method, and call all men to sal- unto him.
v that being supposed, the truth of all *Moses*'s prophecies cannot stioned. And whatever the *Jews* opinion be concerning the plishment of some of them, it is sufficient for us, that they have lly and faithfully preserved the books wherein those prophecies we see so exactly fulfilled, are contained.
we cannot reasonably suspect *Moses*, or any other *Jew*, of forging

the prophecies which foretold the calling of the Gentiles: not *Moſes* ſeeing all his laws do tend (as I ſhall ſhew hereafter more at large) t eſtabliſh that reſtriction I was juſt now ſpeaking of, which was to con tinue to the Meſſiah's coming: not the *Jews*, ſeeing that none of them ca ſtill endure to hear of the removal of that reſtriction, by the calling o the Gentiles; and that they are all poſſeſſed with ſuch a ſpirit of env and jealouſy againſt all other nations, that they perfectly hate and abo minate them. But beſides, we cannot deſire a better, nor a more au thentic accompliſhment of thoſe oracles, which are ſo oppoſite to th *Jewiſh* principles and prejudices, than that which we ourſelves are wit neſſes of.

The ſame reflexion belongs to the other prophecies of *Moſes* concern ing the total diſſipation of the *Jewiſh* ſtate; as alſo to the dreadful ac compliſhment of them in our days. The moſt reſolved obſtinacy ca ſuggeſt but one objection in this matter, which is, that either the Chriſ tians or the Jews have falſified *Moſes*'s writings, and inſerted thoſe pro phecies which we now find there, concerning the vocation of the Gen tiles, and the diſperſion of the *Jews*, after thoſe things were come t paſs.

But firſt, the books of *Moſes*, which both Chriſtians and *Jews* have are written in Hebrew, and penned in ſuch a ſtyle as evidences the antiquity, and as would be inimitable now.

Secondly, that theſe books have been all tranſlated into Greek, al moſt 300 years before Jeſus Chriſt, and about 350 years before the de ſtruction of *Jeruſalem*. Neither the *Jews*, nor yet the Chriſtians, wer any longer ſole maſters of them, when the heathens had them alſo i their hands.

Beſides, thoſe who were converted to Chriſtianity from Judaiſm an Heatheniſm, did not only find theſe prophecies of *Moſes* in the hands o *Jews* and Heathens, long before the converſion of the Gentiles, and th deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, but did alſo make uſe of them to evince again the *Jews*, that the Meſſiah was already come.

Thus, I think, I have ſufficiently demonſtrated the truth and divinit of all *Moſes*'s prophecies which we find in *Exodus* and the followin books.

CHAP. IX.

That it appears, by the Nature of his Relations, that MOSES *had the Meſſia in View when he wrote the Book of* GENESIS.

I HAVE ſhewed, in my former reflexions upon *Geneſis*, that thoſe wh lived before *Moſes*'s time, had a diſtinct knowledge that God wou certainly raiſe up a deliverer amongſt them, although they were n certain of the manner of his appearance; and I have beſides, I think ſufficient

ently proved, that the various ideas which the ancients enter- of him upon the firſt promiſe made by God of his coming, were ccaſion of ſeveral criminal actions committed by the Patriarchs, y thoſe of other nations who had the ſame pretenſions with

n now to prove that *Moſes* himſelf had the ſame knowledge, and n the ſame expectation with the ancients that preceded him. It is re importance to be ſhewn, and that henceforth nobody may won- f I pretend that the greateſt part of the laws he gave to the *Jews*, n reference to civil and religious matters, and the greateſt part of ophecies, as alſo thoſe others mentioned by Prophets that lived im in that *Jewiſh* commonwealth, do all ſuppoſe a diſtinct rela- o the promiſed Meſſiah.

l to make this evident, I beg leave to offer to the reader's conſi- on ſome general reflexions upon *Moſes*'s hiſtory in *Geneſis*.

t, it cannot be denied that *Moſes* was one of the greateſt and wiſeſt ans that ever was: there cannot be a greater deſign, nor a more lt taſk than his was, to write the hiſtory of 2400 years: he gives ount of the creation of the world in general; and in particular, t of a man, of his ſin, of the promiſe God made him after the fall, flood, of the original of all the nations that were in his time.

way and manner of writing is alſo very extraordinary: the majeſty ſtile is tempered with an admirable plainneſs; he deſcribes all of paſſions, to the life; he is admirable in his characters of the e ſpeaks of, and of God himſelf. To be convinced of this, let an read his deſcription of *Abraham*'s ſacrifice, and of the ſeveral s *Joſeph* and his brethren were moved and affected with, when he himſelf known to them. Beſides all that, we may obſerve two urpriſing things in the book of *Geneſis*.

e firſt is, that *Moſes* recites there ſuch things as ſeem to be un- y to be taken notice of, by ſo grave and wiſe a hiſtorian as he was: es, for inſtance, an exact and particular account of all the circum- s of *Abraham*'s purchaſe of the cave of *Machpelah*, for a burying- for his wife; he ſets down all the particulars of the inceſt of *Judah* Thamar; and he relates the manner how *Leah* with her ſons man- obtained leave of *Rachel* to enjoy her huſband for one night, with riſing exactneſs.

e other is, that *Moſes* records a whole ſeries of horrible crimes, ſeem to be as ſo many blemiſhes and odious reflexions upon the ry of thoſe whoſe hiſtory he writes.

w it is not reaſonable to ſuppoſe that *Moſes*, being ſo prudent as confeſſed to be, could have been ſo injudicious as to chooſe and ut ſuch paſſages and actions as are in themſelves either trivial and moment, or horrible and odious, to fill up with them a book in he gives a deſcription of the creation of the world, where he wn the oracles of God at every turn.

s natural therefore to judge, that he had ſome particular proſpect eyes, which could be no other than that of the *promiſe*, which juſtifies his recital of trivial things, and of crimes, in ſuch a ſc- iſtory as his is.

I ſhall not repeat here what I have already obſerved upon the crim which he relates in *Geneſis*; I add only, that he had the ſame deſign an proſpect in his narration of ſuch ſmall and inconſiderable tranſactions.

Thus, by his account of the purchaſe of the cave of *Machpelah*, h intention was to ſhew how God intended, by this ſepulchre, to aſſi *Abraham*, and his poſterity after him, to the land of *Canaan*: his ſcop and proſpect was the ſame when he records the burial of *Rachel* *Ephrathah*.

As for the crimes *Moſes* relates, I have before proved, that he deſigne thereby to ſhew how all the faithful before his time had their min altogether taken up with the thoughts and hopes of the accompliſhmen of the promiſe: and herein, we may ſay, the wiſdom of *Moſes* is ve conſpicuous and diſcernable in the choice he made of thoſe actions, perpetuate the memory of the exceſſive deſire which the ancients had accompliſh the promiſe.

And let no man object here, that it is very ſtrange to ſee, that durin ſo many ages the promiſe of the Meſſiah occaſioned no other than wicke actions; for as it appears, by all circumſtances, that thoſe crimes relate by *Moſes* were committed in different times, and long after one anothe ſo it is plain that he hath recorded thoſe actions on purpoſe to ſhe what impreſſion the true knowledge of the promiſe of the Meſſiah ma upon the mind of thoſe that had it in its perfection and integrity.

If *Moſes* had inſerted in this book of *Geneſis* any long diſcourſe made by *Adam* about that matter upon a ſabbath-day, or if he had giv us a relation of what ſuch an one as *Seth*, or *Enoch*, or *Sem*, uſed to tea concerning that promiſe in their religious aſſemblies; it is certai that, beſides the inconvenience of a tedious repetition which he mu have made of the ſame things in every particular account he gives of t ſeveral generations that preceded him, he could never have perſuad his readers ſo well as he may do now.

Firſt, men would have been apt to ſuſpect that thoſe ſpeeches up the promiſe of the Meſſiah were of his own making, and like thoſe harangues we find in *Xenophon* or *Livy*.

Secondly, the crimes that were committed, to get thereby ſome a vantage: as, for inſtance, the murder of a king committed by his he and ſucceſſor to the crown, ſhews in the murderer a much grea ambition, and affectation of the throne, and ſuppoſes in him a diſtin and clear knowledge of his rights and pretenſions to the empire.

CHAP.

CHAP. X.

at the ſame Perſuaſion appears throughout the whole Conduct of MOSES, *until his Death.*

UT it is not only by thoſe and the like reflexions which may be made upon the choice *Moſes* hath made of the things which he re-es, that we may gather that he had always the promiſe of the Meſſiah view; for he being deſcended from *Abraham*, there is no doubt but it, from his youth up, he was brought up in the religion, and con-uently in the hopes, of that Patriarch.

But moreover we have reaſon to think, that the idea of this promiſe the Meſſiah was much more lively and ſtrong in that family, ever ce *Jacob* on his death-bed had foretold and promiſed to *Judah*, that was out of his tribe he was to be born. As for *Joſeph*, to whom that omiſe might have been applied by the children of *Iſrael*, becauſe of power and glory in *Egypt*; the *Egyptian* perſecution that followed ne time after his deceaſe, reſolved all ſcruples and miſtakes that might herwiſe have been entertained in that matter, and ſo convinced all oſe poor ſufferers, that their Meſſiah was as yet to come.

To all theſe ſtrong preſumptions, whereby we may gueſs what the oughts of *Moſes* might be concerning the promiſe of the Meſſiah, we ay add the conſideration both of his words and actions, which do very ainly eſtabliſh the ſame truth.

St. *Paul*, in his epiſtle to the *Hebrews* (z), mentions two particular tions of *Moſes*, which, as they challenge our admiration, ſo they de-rve our ſerious conſideration, becauſe they clearly, I think, evidence at *Moſes* was fully perſuaded of the future accompliſhment of that omiſe.

The firſt is, that he refuſed to be called the ſon of *Pharaoh*'s daughter, ooſing rather to ſuffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy e pleaſures of ſin for a ſeaſon, eſteeming the reproach of Chriſt greater ches than the treaſures in *Egypt*, for he had reſpect unto the recom-nſe of the reward. From whence could a reſolution ſo oppoſite to the dinary prudence and natural inclinations of other men proceed in him, it was not, as St. *Paul* obſerves it, from a very extraordinary ſource, z. from that ſtrong perſuaſion which he had, that how calamitous ever the then preſent condition of the people of God might be, yet od had choſen it therein to accompliſh that great promiſe which was e joy of all their anceſtors from *Adam* down to them, the remembrance hereof he renewed, by illuſtrating thoſe oracles which *Jacob* pro-ounced upon his death-bed?

The other is, that *Moſes* always adhered to that miſerable people, and od by them in all their calamities and preſſures. It is true, he left em, and retired once into *Midian*, to ſave his life, and avoid the king's dignation; but he returned to them into *Egypt*, as ſoon he had received

(z) Heb. xi.

his commiſſion from God, to deliver them out of their miſery and bon dage: now he ſhewed again, by ſo doing, that he had a certain know ledge of that great promiſe of God made to that people, and a fu aſſurance and perſuaſion of its future accompliſhment.

Moſes informs us indeed, how he refuſed at firſt the commiſſion Go gave him to deliver his people from the *Egyptian* ſlavery, and how h excuſed himſelf upon his own incapacity, and being unfit for ſo a grea an undertaking: but yet he makes at the ſame time ſo viſible an alluſio to the prophecy concerning the *Shiloh* (*i. e.* ſent), *O my Lord* (ſaid he to God) *ſend, I pray thee, by the hand of him whom thou wilt ſend*, that h could hardly expreſs and declare his mind about it more plainly.

But we ſhall be the better convinced of his alluſion to the ſending o the *Shiloh*, if we reflect upon *Moſes*'s being of the tribe of *Levi*, o which God had pronounced nothing concerning the future accompliſh ment of the promiſe; he could not be ignorant of his being himſelf ex cluded of that privilege; and that, after all, what glory ſoever the mira culous preſervation and illuſtrious beginnings of his life might ſeem t pretend and promiſe to him, yet he could not expect to riſe much highe than *Joſeph* had done before him, although he would reaſſume the for mer poſt to which his adoption by *Pharaoh*'s daughter had once raiſe him.

We ſee that *Moſes* continued always of the ſame mind, and enter tained ſtill the ſame notion and hopes of the promiſe of the Meſſiah even after God had revealed to him, that the time of his appearing int the world was not yet come: this, I ſay, we ſee by his ſpeech to th people of *Iſrael*, related in the eigthteenth chapter of *Deuteronomy*, *Th Lord thy God* (ſaith he to them) *will raiſe up unto thee a Prophet fro the midſt of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me, unto him you ſhall harken* he does not ſay a prieſt, or a king, though the Meſſiah was to be both but he ſaith, a Prophet to teach them not to miſtake any of their prieſ or kings for the Meſſiah, but to expect and regard leſs, in his perſon, th external honour of *Aaron*'s family, and the worldly grandeur of king than the privilege of Divine inſpiration, which was abſolutely neceſſar to him as the founder of the true religion.

CHAP. XI.

That BALAAM*'s Prophecy, which* MOSES *relates, is a further Argumen of the ſame Perſuaſion in him.*

AS we ought to ſhew that *Moſes* had a very clear and diſtinct know ledge of this promiſe, ſo, I think, it will not be amiſs to mak here a particular reflexion upon what he relates *Numb.* xxiii.

The *Moabites* being deſcended from *Lot*'s eldeſt daughter, it is ver natural to conceive, that *Balac* their king was ſo deſirous to have th

raelites curſed from God, and by one of his prophets only, becauſe he ſigned thereby to ſecure himſelf of the divine bleſſing; or, which is the me thing, of the privilege of the accompliſhment of the promiſe, to hich he thought he had a juſt claim and pretenſion by his being one *Lot*'s poſterity.

And this obſervation upon *Balac*'s pretenſion and action, is the more ſt and well grounded, becauſe the notion of the curſe which he inded to have had pronounced againſt the *Iſraelites* is directly oppoſite the terms of the promiſe which God made to *Abraham*, *In thy ſeed ſhall l the nations of the earth be bleſſed*; which words, as I obſerved before, o import a direct oppoſition to *Lot*'s pretenſion.

Now all this being ſuppoſed, one needs only conſider the terms of the ophecy ſpoken by *Balaam* in favour of *Jacob*, to ſee that *Moſes* hath lated it, only to ſhew,

Firſt, that although thoſe neighbouring nations to *Judea* had degene- ted, and corrupted themſelves much by their communication with *lam*'s poſterity, yet they preſerved a ſtrong, though confuſed notion of eir anceſtors pretenſions, and acted according to that prejudice of eirs in all matters and occurrences of great moment.

Secondly, that it might be an authentic determination of all the ſe- ral conteſts and pretenſions which had divided the poſterity of *Terah* ntil that time.

It is like a definitive ſentence; firſt, in favour of *Abraham*, againſt the *Icabites* and *Ammonites*, who were deſcended from *Lot*; ſecondly, in vour of *Iſaac*, againſt the pretenſion of the *Iſmaelites*, deſcended from *ſmael*; thirdly, in favour of *Jacob*, againſt the pretenſion of the *Edo- ites*, deſcended from *Eſau*.

For when he foretels that there ſhall come a ſtar out of *Jacob*, he ecides the three forementioned controverſies; *Jacob* having been pre- rred to *Eſau*, *Iſaac* to *Iſmael*, and *Abraham* to *Lot*. Now *Jacob* could ot be preferred to the *Moabites*, but he muſt be ſo too to the *Ammonites*, *ſmaelites*, and *Edomites*.

This prophecy, as any one may ſee, is abſolutely neceſſary, becauſe reſolves all the queſtions and controverſies which did excite ſo many alouſies amongſt all thoſe neighbouring nations.

This oracle of *Balaam* is yet the more remarkable, becauſe, that not- withſtanding it was pronounced at the entry into *Canaan*, the poſſeſſing nd inhabiting of which country was one of the chiefeſt characters of the *ſraelites* diſtinction from all other nations, yet in it *Balaam* makes a very iſtinct mention of the future calling of the Gentiles to the faith; he alls them the children of *Seth*, to intimate that in the time of the Meſ- ah, the reſtriction made and obſerved by God before that time, was nen to ceaſe, and that there ſhould be no more diſtinction betwixt the *ews* and Gentiles, who were all the children of *Noah*, and all equally eſcended from *Seth* by him, becauſe then all nations were to be called o the communion of the *Meſſiah*.

I know that ſome, by the children of *Seth*, underſtand the inhabitants f a certain town in the country of *Moab*, mentioned in the xvth of *ſaiah*, according to the Septuagint.

But the *Arabian* interpreter of the *Samaritans* (*a*) brings very goo arguments to prove, that that place of Scripture is to be underſtood o the Meſſiah, and ſhews that he is called the head of the children of *Seth* becauſe *Seth* was the head and common father of all men ſince the flood and at the ſame time of all the faithful before the flood; and that thos words of *Geneſis* iv. 26. *Then began men to call upon the name of the Lord* relate to *Seth*, and not to *Enos*, as it is commonly believed.

Beſides, this prophecy by theſe words, *I ſhall ſee him, but not now; ſhall behold him, but not nigh*, determines that the birth of the *Meſſia* was not near, but was reſerved for a further time.

Laſtly, it is a very ſingular thing, that this oracle ſhould be repre ſented to us as coming out of the mouth of a Prophet who was choſe by God out of the family of *Abraham*; becauſe the author of it decide theſe important queſtions and differences, without any viſible partiality and without being biaſſed by the pretenſions of his birth.

Now there are three things in it which clearly prove that it could no be unknown to *Moſes*.

The firſt is, that immediately after this prophecy, which was as pub lic and well known amongſt the *Moabites* as any prophecy could be after the tedious preparation, and the many difficulties which *Balaa* made to come to *Balac*; after the many ceremonies and myſteries whic he uſed upon that occaſion; and notwithſtanding the great and pani terror of the *Moabites*, at the approach of the *Iſraelites*; nay, and not withſtanding the expreſs threats and ominous prophecies of *Balaa* againſt that people; notwithſtanding all this, I ſay, we ſee the daughter of *Moab* imitating the carnal prudence of *Lot*'s daughters, and courtin the alliance of the *Iſraelites*, as if they had had a mind to make them ſelves amends in that way for the loſs and wrong they had ſuffered b the ſentence which *Balaam* pronounced in favour of *Iſrael*.

We ſee, I ſay, that *Moſes*, immediately after he had related the pro phecies of *Balaam*, tells us, that the daughters of *Moab* invited th people of *Iſrael* to the ſacrifices of their gods, and that the people o *Iſrael* accepted of the invitation, and accordingly feaſted, and bega then to defile themſelves with the daughters of *Moab*.

Now, that ſuch a thing ſhould happen preſently after *Balaam* had ut tered his prophecy, ſhews evidently that there was ſome relation be twixt thoſe two tranſactions. And this may be further made out, fro the manner and nature of the puniſhment which God inflicted upon th *Iſraelites* for their criminal commerce with the *Moabites*; although th pretence of it might be grounded upon the deſign which the daughter of *Moab* had formed, according to the principles of their education, t ſhare in the accompliſhment of the promiſe, by their conceiving an gettting children by thoſe whom *Balaam*'s prophecy had inveſted wit the right and privilege of accompliſhing that promiſe.

The ſecond is, that accordingly, about two hundred years after *Moſes* we ſee that *Ruth* the *Moabiteſs* left her own country, to ſettle and live a *Bethlehem*, and affected beſides to marry there again one of the tribe o *Judah*; no doubt becauſe ſhe had got in her own county a certai knowledg

(*a*) *Abuſaid, MS.* in the *French* King's library, note 4. upon Gen. iv. 24.

owledge of that famous oracle, which afterwards made her easily yield the counsels, and receive instructions both of her mother-in-law and her own husband, who was of the tribe of *Judah*, and, no doubt, had book of *Moses*, wherein were inserted both the prophecy of *Jacob* favour of *Judah*, and that of *Balaam* in favour of the *Israelites* against *Moabites*.

The third is, that the *Jews* have now for several ages constantly intained, that *Simei*'s curses against *David* (*b*), which afterwards he led *maledictionem pessimam*, נמר זת contained an upbraiding reflexion well upon the meanness of his birth, as being descended from a *Moab-s*, as upon his adultery, &c. This is related by St. *Jerome*, or some ner ancient author, who writ that discourse, *de traditionibus Hebræorum*, on the second chapter of the third book of *Kings*. This *Jewish* inter-etation would be very probable, if that was but true what *Rabbi Salo-n* saith upon the second chapter of the first book of *Kings*, v. 19. that nen we read there that *Solomon* caused a seat to be set for the king's other, we ought to understand it of *Ruth* the *Moabites*, and not of *thsheba*. We know the *Jews* ascribe a much longer life to *Zarah*, the ughter of *Asher*, one of *Jacob*'s sons; for they are still of the same inion as they were in St. *Hierome's* time, that she was yet alive in *avid*'s time.

Nobody can condemn this reflexion upon *Ruth*, if he will but con-ler, that her faith having been so rewarded, that the *Messiah* came out her posterity, she is particularly made mention of in his genealogy; nd that on the other hand her history hath been preserved amongst the her books of the Old Testament, as a kind of prescription, not only ainst the *Moabites* pretensions, long before condemned by *Balaam*'s ophecy, but also against those of the *Ismaelites* and *Edomites*, who had better claim to the promise than the *Moabites*, having no other than at of a general call, and of their birthright before *Jacob*'s posterity.

CHAP. XII.

That one may see also, in MOSES's *Law, plain Footsteps of God's Design, in distinguishing these from whom he would have the Messiah to be born.*

IT was altogether necessary for the execution of my design, to establish well the authority of *Moses*'s books, upon which I intend make some reflexions: it was likewise necessary to shew, as I think have done sufficiently, that *Moses* was perfectly acquainted with God's promise concerning the Messiah. Therefore, I believe, I may ow come to shew, that both *Moses*, and those that came after him, had ll an eye upon the Messiah in their chiefest regulations.

But to give a greater insight and understanding into the things that am to say, I think it may not be amiss to remind the reader, and to ay before him once more, the several characters of God's conduct in that

(*b*) I. Kings ii. 8.

that matter, that he may be the better able to judge of the whole scri of his design.

I have heretofore shewed, that *Moses*'s intention was to establish tw things in the book of *Genesis*.

The one, that all men have derived their original from *Adam*, whor God created.

The other, that man having sinned, God promised to reinstate hir by one of his own posterity.

The first of these was then solidly proved by a plain matter of fac when I shewed that such a tradition as *Moses* relates about the creatio of the world, cannot reasonably be doubted of.

As for what concerns the other, viz. the promise of the Messiah which was the chiefest object of man's hope and comfort, I have alr shewed, I think, that the notion and expectation of it was very stron and lively, and the original cause of all the extraordinary actions re corded by Moses.

But as this promise was not to be fulfilled for many ages, so God made it only in very general terms, and had still reserved to himself th revelation for after ages, as he thought fit, both as to the manner an time of its accomplishment. It is therefore absolutely necessary that w should consider also how God preserved all along the distinct knowledg of it amongst men.

Now, in reading my reflexions upon *Genesis*, one must needs have ob served that God, even in those early times of the world, did restrain th privilege of accomplishing that promise by little and little to some par ticular men; till at last he openly declared, that he had settled it in the tribe of *Judah*, as we read in *Gen.* xlix.

Thus we see, that God in the very beginning of the world restrained that prerogative to *Seth*'s family, and excluded *Cain*'s from it: then afterwards, of all *Seth*'s family, he restrained it to *Noah* alone and his family; then, of *Noah*'s family, to *Shem* alone; then, afterwards, of all *Shem*'s posterity, to *Abraham* alone; then, of *Abraham*'s sons, to *Isaac* alone; and of *Isaac*'s, to *Jacob* alone, whose son *Judah* was alone invested with that privilege, and all his brethren excluded.

It is moreover observable, that in those seven forementioned restrictions which God made, he seems to have affected to prefer the youngest to the eldest; as it is evident in his choice, if not of *Noah*, and *Shem*, who was elder than the other sons, yet certainly in that of *Seth*, who was younger than *Cain*; of *Abraham*, who was the youngest of *Terah*'s sons; of *Isaac*, who was younger than *Ismael*; of *Jacob*, who was younger than *Esau*; and of *Judah*, who was one of the youngest of *Leah*'s sons.

So likewise, if the reader would judge of God's design by the event alone, he might justly conclude that God, by this affected choice, intended to raise continual jealousies betwixt the eldest (who pretended that the privilege of accomplishing the promise did belong to them because of their birthright) against their youngest brothers, whom they saw preferred by God's immediate choice.

One may also further add, that God seems to have strengthened these jealousies, by introducing sometimes a sort of conformity amongst the pretenders

tenders to the execution of this promise: thus, for instance, as *Abra-m* had two children, so *Lot* had two; as *Jacob* had twelve sons, so *au* had also twelve: and sometimes one may find, that those particular sons who are preferred, are charged with very severe accusations.

Now, after all these general reflexions, it is natural for us to consider, hat care God hath upon all occasions particularly taken to distinguish d protect those whom he had invested with the right of accomplish-g the promise, that their state and succession might never be uncer-n.

It was this design, no doubt, which obliged God to make *Seth* the positary of his service and worship, that he might thereby save *Noah* om the flood, and so procure to *Shem* his father's blessing.

It was for this reason that he called *Abraham* out of his own country, d made him travel from place to place, to make him thereby famous the world, and to invite men by that means to inquire after his pro-ssion, his hopes, and his religion.

Again, it was for this that he obliged this Patriarch to the practice circumcision, which was a real distinction, and an indelible charac-r; and that he likewise confined him to a certain place, by fixing him some sort to the cave of *Machpelah*, which he had purchased of the ildren of *Hamor*.

Lastly, it was for that reason that God would have the posterity of *acob* distinguished from all other nations of the world, and that he ohibited all alliance with them, as also all imitations of the customs nd religious ceremonies practised amongst them.

Now all this being supposed, I say, that whether we consider the end nd principal design of *Moses*'s laws, or whether we examine his several ophecies, which do particularly characterise the Messiah, we shall nd that God did all along continue in his first design of distinction, and onsequently of keeping up the jealousies of those that had any preten-ons to the privilege of accomplishing the promise; or, which is all ne, that he hath prosecuted the same design to Jesus Christ's time, in hom Christians do maintain that the first promise was accomplished, od having then, and not till then, both put an end to all those differ-nces and distinctions, which were only intended to make the Messiah e better known, and the more certainly discerned at his coming, and en to cease; just as scaffolds are taken away as soon as the building is nished; and having also on the other hand rectified the principles from hich flowed that spirit of jealousy, amongst those who had the same retension.

We see, that accordingly God excluded all other nations from the ght of accomplishing this promise.

We see, that even in the family of *Judah*, who was himself the oungest of the first set of *Leah*'s children, he restrained the execution f it to the youngest brothers.

We see, that he raised occasions of jealousies, even amongst the tribes f *Israel*.

In a word, we see, that of all those means which can distinguish any ne people from all other nations of the world, or one tribe from twelve, ne family from all other families of the same tribe, and one particular person

perſon from all the reſt of his family, none were omitted, but (on the contrary) all made uſe of by God, to follow this his firſt deſign.

This I intend firmly to eſtabliſh, by examining the thing gradually from *Moſes*'s time, (by whoſe miniſtry God enacted and publiſhed thoſe laws by the means whereof he intended the Meſſiah might certainly be known) to the coming of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, in whom we believe that the promiſe was accompliſhed.

CHAP. XIII.

That the Manner of God's promulgating his Law amongſt the ISRAELITES, *did much conduce to the diſtinguiſhing them from all other Nations.*

I DO not barely deſign here at firſt to obſerve the ſeveral reſemblances which are obſervable betwixt the things related by *Moſes* in *Geneſis*, and thoſe which one finds in the following books.

Neither will I merely eſtabliſh here that, as *Jacob*'s going down into *Egypt* with all his children, and the protection they all received there, from *Joſeph*, did ſerve to fulfill the prediction which God made of that event by *Joſeph*'s dreams, ſo we may ſay in general, that the ſending of *Moſes*, his miracles, and his whole miniſtry to the time of his death, when he intruſted *Joſhua* with the conduct of the *Jews*, were a literal accompliſhment of the firſt part of the promiſe which God had formerly made to *Abraham*, to deliver the fourth generation of his poſterity out of the captivity which it was to fall into, and then to bring it into the land of *Canaan* to poſſeſs it.

Moſes indeed repreſents that people, according to the tenor of the prophecy, as groaning under the hard preſſure of a cruel captivity in *Egypt*, when *Joſeph* and his eminent ſervices were both forgotten.

Afterwards, he tell us how they were miraculouſly delivered out of that captivity.

And then, laſtly, he informs us, that after he had carried them through many difficulties in the wilderneſs, he brought them at laſt to the very borders of *Canaan*, and ſo left them ready to conquer and poſſeſs it, according to God's promiſes, and their pretenſions grounded upon thoſe promiſes which had been ſo often repeated to them ever ſince *Abraham*'s time.

Joſhua, *Moſes*'s ſucceſſor, and in all likelihood the author of the deſcription of his death, is he that accompliſhed the other part of God's promiſe to *Abraham*, by introducing the *Iſraelites* into *Canaan*, and actually poſſeſſing them of it: ſo there is nothing can be imagined more preciſe in this whole matter.

But it is not all this only that renders both the perſon and miniſtry of *Moſes* ſo glorious: there are ſeveral other things in *Exodus*, and his other following books, which do much better deſerve our conſideration

Thoſe

Thoſe books contain, as I have already obſerved, an exact hiſtory of that God did, in order to give a certain form to the commonwealth *Iſrael*, a fixed place, and a particular ſervice; that is, in order to fol- v his great deſign of having the Meſſiah known without miſtake, enever he ſhould be born amongſt the *Jews:* and this is my chiefeſt n in the reflexions upon *Exodus* and the other books of *Moſes*.

Firſt, we might ſay in general, that the obſervance of the ſabbath, d the uſe of circumciſion, did diſtinguiſh the *Jews*; but yet, I have ewed, that the ſabbath was a law common to all nations in the world, d that circumciſion on the other hand was common both to the *Iſ- elites* and *Edomites:* and this will oblige us to make ſome particular ſervations upon that matter; and we muſt conſider how God took re to diſtinguiſh that people, by giving them his law.

It is in general evident, that the care which God took to give the oral law to that whole people, did eminently diſtinguiſh them from all her nations, whom he permitted to walk in their own ways, as St. *aul* expreſſes it: to be ſure, it ſhews them that he reſolved to fix them himſelf, and to hinder them from following both the idolatries of her nations, and thoſe inundations of vice which ruin all ſocieties.

And, without doubt, the ſurpriſing pomp which accompanied the pro- ulgation of God's law, and which was recorded by his order, before oſe that had been the eye-witneſſes of it, did much contribute to per- ade them that God had a particular regard and kindneſs for their na- on, and that he honoured them with his particular guidance.

We may make the ſame obſervation upon God's giving them a poli- cal law, and upon the care that he was alſo pleaſed to take of regu- ting their civil government, and preventing the difficulties which are ommonly occaſioned by ſuch accidents as cannot be foreſeen by any uman legiſlators, which cauſe great revolutions and changes in all go- ernments; all which ſhew ſufficiently, that his deſign was to raiſe them o to, and to maintain them in as great proſperity and welfare, as oſſibly could be procured to a nation by perfect laws, and a well nſtituted government: even the many ceremonies which God gave em, are a further demonſtration of God's deſign to diſtinguiſh them om other nations.

It ſeems not to have been God's intention at firſt to lay upon them ch numbers of ceremonies; for it was only after the commiſſion of the n of the golden calf, that God laid upon them that heavy and trouble- me yoke, on purpoſe to employ all their time, and ſo keep them from lling into idolatry again. But, however, *Tanchuma* (*c*), a famous *Jewiſh* uthor, obſerves, that there was nothing left in the world, but what God ok care to give the *Iſraelites* ſome laws about: as, for inſtance, if any *ew* went out to plough, he was forbidden to do it with an ox and an aſs; to ſow, he was forbidden to ſow his field with ſeveral kinds of ſeed; to reap, he was forbidden to reap the whole crop: if any one went bout to bake bread, he was commanded to take out of his dough, ſo uch as to make a cake thereof to conſecrate it; if any one did ſacrifice ny animal, he was charged to give away to the prieſt, the right oulder of it, with both the cheeks and inwards; when any one found out

(*c*) *Jalkut.* in *Pent.* fol. 228. col. 3.

out a nest of birds, he was obliged to let the old one fly away; if any one went a hunting, he was to shed the blood of his game, and then to cover it with dust; when any one had planted any fruit-trees, he was to count the first thereof as uncircumcised for the three first years; when any one found a sepulchre, even there certain cautions were prescribed; if any one shaved himself, he was forbidden to *mar the corners of his beard*; when any one built a house, he was to take care there should be rails, and *mezouzoth* made, to prevent all danger; they were obliged to put particular threads in their garments: and there are many other things which were apparently commanded to distinguish the *Jews*, by obliging them to the practice of these, and such other laws as took up all their time. But if we may say, in general, that the whole scope of the ceremonial law was to employ the *Jews*, we may yet more justly say, that it was in particular intended by God to inspire into his people a horror against all idolatrous practices, and an aversion against all commerce with idolaters; and this may be further discerned, if we examine those laws in particular.

One sees this perfectly by the manner of God's pronouncing some meats unclean, and his forbidding to eat the flesh of some animals; for we may find that the greatest part of these animals were worshipped amongst the heathens. Thus the more learned amongst the *Jews* prove that the goat and the ram were of that number; but so, no doubt, were all the animals which were usually offered in sacrifice to God, as particularly the bull. Now there is nothing which alienates two nations from one another more, than when one of them eats or sacrifices that which the other makes the object of his religion.

One of the most learned authors that ever the *Jews* had, hath diligently observed, that God gave many ceremonial laws directly contrary to those rites which the *Zabij* used in their superstitions; and a learned *English* Doctor (*d*) hath lately proved it very largely, as to the ceremonies which God commanded to be used in the sacrifice of the paschal lamb, and in the manner of their building of the altar, and of their going up to it; in the prohibition of seething a kid in his mother's milk, and of offering honey in their sacrifices; in the prohibition of their forcing their children to pass through the fire to *Moloch*; in the law which prohibited their eating blood, and rounding the corners of their heads, and making any marks in their flesh; and in I do not know how many other laws of that nature, the design of whose institution is not so evident now, since the rites of all those ancient idolaters are utterly abolished, and but imperfectly recorded in some ancient authors.

Thus we see, that we need only make a very little reflexion upon God's conduct, in giving all his laws to the *Israelites*, thereby to judge, that the main scope of those laws was to put a bar betwixt the people of *Israel* and all other idolatrous nations, which should be a visible and a constant distinction, till the Messiah should be born, who was to make all those marks of discrimination to cease entirely.

(*d*) *Spencer* de Leg. *Mos.* lib. 2.

CHAP. XIV.

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t God seems to have designed to keep up a Spirit of Jealousy in the very Bosom of the JEWISH *Nation.*

VE have seen, in general, that God, by giving his law to the *Israelites*, intended to discriminate them from all other nations the world, and in particular from those nations which had shewed mselves to be jealous of that distinction; I mean from the *Moabites*, *Ammonites*, the *Ismaelites*, and the *Edomites*, as I shall hereafter shew. have likewise observed that God, by his conduct, and his oracles, also excite a spirit of jealousy amongst the several pretenders to the mise. I come now to shew that God hath followed the same design his law, and that he hath made use of that jealousy as of another ans to make that people, which he had seperated from all other na-ns, keep up always amongst themselves a lively notion and expectation the Messiah.

Perhaps the reader may think that these reflexions may interrupt the es of the observations I have undertaken to make upon *Moses*'s law: besides that I shall resume them presently, so one may easily discern, t these two remarks concerning the spirit of distinction, and the spi-of jealousy, kept up in the bosom of this people, ought to be well nsidered by those that desire to know the genius of God's laws, and original causes of all the transactions related by *Moses*, and by the er sacred authors, who acted in pursuance of that design which ap-rs in those laws which *Moses* gave to the people of *Israel*.

I begin with two general reflexions, which I think are very useful in explanation of God's conduct upon this occasion.

Two things, as I have already observed, have conduced to keep up t jealousy whereof *Moses* has given so many instances in the book *Genesis*.

The first is, the preference which God hath commonly given to the unger brothers before the elder.

The second is, the choice which God hath made of such particular rsons as appeared absolutely unworthy of God's choice.

So that here one sees a continual series in the *Jewish* history written *Moses*, and by the Prophets, who made the same observations upon t *model* which *Moses* had given them.

First of all, the tribe of *Judah* is preferred before all the other tribes *Israel*, and particularly before the tribe of *Reuben*, which afterwards casioned the insurrection of some *Reubenites* in their sedition against *oses*, wherein *Corah*, *Dathan*, and *Abiram*, perished; just as God's pre-ring *Abel* offended *Cain*, and as *Joseph*'s brethren conspired together put him to death, because of his dreams, which foretold his greatness d their fall.

Secondly, one sees that *Phares*, *Judah*'s youngest son, is preferred t only before all the other children of *Judah*, but even before *Zerah*, the

the eldeſt of the twins which *Judah* had by *Thamar*; juſt as *Jacob* was preferred before his brother *Eſau*, though they were twins, and *Eſau* born the firſt of the two.

One ſees afterwards, that God having choſen *Jeſſe* of all the poſterity of *Phares*, *David*, the youngeſt of all his ſons, was preferred before his brethren, when God was pleaſed to tranſlate the kingdom to the tribe of *Judah*, and to the family of *Jeſſe*; juſt as we ſaw before, in the election of the firſt king whom the *Iſraelites* deſired to be ſet over them, that he was choſen by lot, by an extraordinary effect of providence, out of the tribe of *Benjamin*, though the youngeſt of all *Jacob*'s children.

Thus one ſees that *Solomon*, the youngeſt of *David*'s children, was preferred before his brothers, and that the ſame *Solomon* built the temple of God in the tribe of *Benjamin*, though he himſelf was of the tribe of *Judah*.

We ſhall afterwards ſee that the Meſſiah was deſcended from *David*, by *Nathan*, ſon to one of *David*'s younger children, and by *Reſah*, *Zorababel*'s youngeſt ſon, from whom the Bleſſed Virgin drew her original.

The ſecond remark is about the care God hath taken, by his choice of ſome particular perſons to accompliſh the promiſe, to furniſh thoſe with pretences and objections, who might be intereſted to oppoſe the reſtrictions which God had made in favour of their equals; for as they ſerved to keep up a jealouſy amongſt all the pretenders to the promiſe, ſo they alſo ſerved to preſerve a diſtinct knowledge of it, and to make them inquire more diligently after it.

In ſhort, as we ſee that the *Iſmaelites* might upbraid *Sarah* both with her frequent rapes, and with her cruelty to *Agar* and *Iſmael*; as the *Edomites* might upbraid *Jacob*'s poſterity with *Rebecca*'s ſupplanting their father *Eſau*, and cheating him of his bleſſing; ſo likewiſe we may obſerve that God not only choſe *Thamar* to have the Meſſiah deſcend from her, but alſo would have her inceſt with her father-in-law recorded. What! might all the other tribes of *Iſrael* ſay, were there then no honeſt women in *Iſrael*, that the Meſſiah's anceſtors muſt deſcend from thoſe that were born of an inceſtuous commerce? What probability is there that God ſhould chooſe the tribe of *Judah*? Had not all the other children of *Judah* a fairer pretenſion to this privilege, than *Phares* could have? And might not their poſterity revive againſt the poſterity of *Phares* that ſevere law againſt baſtard children which we read of *Deut.* xxiii.

God choſe in the like manner *Ruth* the *Moabiteſs*, and had her hiſtory written, and his choice recorded, as if he had intended to prepare an excuſe for thoſe of the *Iſraelites* who afterwards would refuſe to ſubmit to *David*. What probability is there, might they ſay, that God would have the Meſſiah to be born of a *Moabiteſs*, ſeeing it was by his order that *Moſes* cauſed all thoſe *Iſraelites* to be put to death, who after the pronunciation of *Balaam*'s prophecy held any commerce with the daughters of *Moab*? Was there any likelihood that ſuch a thing could be poſſible, eſpecially ſeeing there was a law which God would have to be inſerted in *Deuteronomy*, which excludeth the *Moabites* from the poſſibility of ever being admitted into the people of God. But at leaſt, was not this

s choice of *Ruth* the *Moabiteſs*, a fair cauſe of jealouſy to all the ner families of *Judah?*

God cauſed the adultery of *Bathſheba*, the mother of *Solomon*, to be refully recorded, as it were on purpoſe to excuſe the rebellion of oſe who afterwards ſided with *Jeroboam*, againſt *Rehoboam* and his thority.

Is it probable (might theſe rebels ſay) that God would have choſen at bloody cruel man *David*, that adulterer, that he and *Bathſheba* ould beget the Meſſiah together?

Had *Jeſſe* no other children beſides *David?* And if *David* muſt needs ve been the man, why ſhould *Solomon*, born of *Bathſheba*, be preferred fore all his brothers?

There are three things conſiderable in this matter.

The firſt is, that God having given to *Joſhua* the conduct of the *aelites*, after he had formerly raiſed *Joſeph* ſo much above his brethren his advancement in *Egypt*, and given to his tribe two portions of the nd of *Canaan*, he permitted that *Jeroboam* ſhould riſe up againſt *Re-oam*, *Solomon*'s ſon; and not only ſo, but ſhould likewiſe, according the prophecy related *Gen.* xxviii. 17. build a temple at *Bethel*, as being alous againſt *Solomon*, who built one upon mount *Moriah*, according the prophecy we find in *Geneſis* xxii. 14.

The ſecond is, that this ſeparation gave a fair pretence to raiſe the putation of the prophecies which *Jacob* uttered upon his death-bed in vour of *Joſeph*; which prophecies ran in terms ſo very high, that they t only gave colour to *Jeroboam*'s pretenſions to the kingdom, but did o lead the ten tribes into an expectation that the Meſſiah ſhould be rn, not in the tribe of *Judah*, as *Jacob* had expreſsly foretold, *Geneſis* x. but in the tribe of *Ephraim*, according to the conſtant cuſtom of od's preferring the younger ſons of a family before the elder, in the atter of this promiſe.

The third is, that even the greateſt part of the two loyal tribes re-ved at laſt the interpretation which the other ten made of that pro-ecy. At leaſt, it appears, that many of the *Jews* have endeavoured prove that the Meſſiah ſhould come from the tribe of *Ephraim*, by erpreting ſeveral prophecies that way, which, according to their ac-unt and their prejudices, were expreſſed in ſuch terms as could not be derſtood of him that was to be born in the tribe of *Judah*, and out of royal family of *David*.

CHAP. XV.

That Circumcision was a Means of distinguishing the ISRAELITES *from other Nations.*

BUT I must now resume my observations upon *Moses*'s laws. Circumcision was, without question, one of the first and most sensible means whereby God did distinguish *Jacob*'s posterity from all other people. I will therefore begin with it.

First, the very signification of the word circumcision, implies a real and corporeal distinction: even *Tacitus* understood it so, when he saith, *Circumcidere genitalia instituêre Judæi ut diversitate noscantur* (*e*). But besides, by it God's covenant was, as it were, printed and engraved in the very flesh of all *Abraham*'s posterity.

God has explained it thus himself in several places; and one may affirm, that this was very agreeable to God's design, which was, as we have intimated before, to hinder that people, from which the Messiah was to be born, from mingling with the other nations of the world, which would have made the pedigree of the Messiah suspected, or at least much more difficult to be traced.

I will not relate here, the several notions of divines about the use of that ceremony, but only content myself to make two very natural reflexions upon it.

The first of which is, that it was particularly in respect of the Messiah, that God would have that mark made upon that part of man's body which is inservient to generation. As the Messiah was to come into the world by generation, according to the words of the first prophecy concerning him, and also according to the further revelations of God to *Abraham* about that promise, so God could do nothing more agreeable to the idea the *Israelites* had of the Messiah, and of his birth, than to distinguish them, by a relation to that blessed seed which he promised them: as God designed, without all question, by that means to oblige the *Jews* to remember the first promise made to mankind; so, no doubt, he intended by it to fix their minds upon the consideration of that favour he had shewed to them as well as to *Abraham*, to distinguish them from all the people of the earth, that the deliverer of the world might be born in their commonwealth, and from one of their posterity.

The second reflexion is, that it was the same prospect to the Messiah, which made God condemn those to death, who should either remain uncircumcised themselves, or leave their children so.

Is it not a very surprising thing, that so much rigour and severity should be used in exacting the observation of a ceremony which was merely indifferent in its nature, and had no moral goodness in itself? But hereby it appears the more evidently, that God designed that the use of circumcision, by which he distinguished *Abraham*'s posterity from all

(*e*) Hist. l. 5.

ther nations of the world, ſhould be a kind of immovable bar, to
ler the *Jews* from mingling with all ſtrangers.

ndeed there are three things which may be objected againſt theſe
xions.

he firſt is, that it does not appear that this ceremony was counted
a proper ſign of diſtinction, ſeeing the uſe of it hath been ſome-
s intermitted; as, for inſtance, when the whole nation of the *Jews*
t off for forty years in the wilderneſs.

he ſecond is, that if the chiefeſt end of circumciſion was to diſtin-
h that people, with deſign to make the Meſſiah known, there was
eed that that yoke ſhould be laid upon all the *Jews*, but only upon
family from which he was to deſcend, or at the moſt upon the tribe
rein that family was compriſed.

he third is, that circumciſion was common both to *Eſau*'s and *Ja-*
poſterity; and even uſed amongſt the *Egyptians*, and the inhabi-
s of *Colchis*, as we may learn from *Herodotus*, and ſome other heathen
ors.

ut after all, it is an eaſy thing to ſatisfy man's mind in all theſe
aring difficulties. I confeſs that one is ſurpriſed to ſee that God
ld not oblige the *Jews* to be circumciſed in the wilderneſs; for
h ſeveral reaſons are given.

irſt, that God, being diſpleaſed with that generation, would not
v that they ſhould be honoured with this token of his covenant:
rs ſay, that their journeying in the wilderneſs gave them a diſpen-
n from the obſervance of that ceremony. But we may give a better,
nk, and more natural account of that matter, if we do but follow
dea which occaſioned my ſecond reflexion.

he going forth of ſome *Egyptians* with the *Iſraelites* out of *Egypt*,
a type of the calling of the Gentiles, as I will ſhew ſomewhere elſe:
as then neceſſary, that as all ceremonies, and circumciſion in parti-
r, were then to be aboliſhed, to take away all diſtinction from
ng *Seth*'s poſterity, ſo the uſe of circumciſion ſhould at that time be
ended.

owever, God would not have the ſuſpenſion of that ceremony to
inue till they were entered into the land of *Canaan*.

rſt, to prevent the intruding of ſome *Canaanites* into the body of
Hebrews.

condly, to the end that theſe *Iſraelites* who were to enter into *Ca-*
, being as well uncircumciſed as the *Egyptians* children, and being
ade afterwards equal by circumciſion, ſhould have no occaſion to
aid them with their *different original*.

he ſecond objection may as eaſily be anſwered: one might think at
that indeed the Meſſiah had been more eaſily known at his coming,
uſe of circumciſion had been enjoined only to the family, or at
to the tribe, from which he was to deſcend: but beſides that it
expoſed that family, or that tribe, to great perſecutions, it had
inly much diminiſhed that ſpirit of jealouſy which was kept up
e conformity of the ſeveral pretenders, which on the other hand
of mighty uſe to preſerve a diſtinct idea of the Meſſiah, and a deſire
s coming.

As for the first objection, there is no difficulty in it: it is true, some *Jewish* interpreters imagine, that *Joseph* took occasion to prescribe the use of circumcision to the *Egyptians*, after *Pharaoh* had commanded his people to do whatsoever *Joseph* should bid them to do: but that conjecture is groundless; for it appears that the *Egyptians* who went out of *Egypt* with *Moses*, were not circumcised. It is true, that nation did, some ages after *Moses*, take up the ceremony of circumcision; and it is very likely that it was some *Egyptian* colony which introduced the use of it into *Colchis:* but the observance of that sole ceremony amongst those nations could cause no confusion, because none of them pretended to derive their original from *Abraham*, but had, as historians observe, quite different reasons from those which the *Jews* had for their practice of circumcision.

As for the *Ismaelites* and *Edomites*, the greatest part of the *Jews* are of opinion, that God did discriminate their circumcision from the circumcision which was practised by those nations, by his institution of what they call the *perigna* after the circumcision; which they endeavour to prove by a passage in *Joshua*, wherein it is said, that God ordered *Joshua* to circumcise again the children of *Israel* the second time. But others of them laugh at that criticism, because it appears that those words do relate to the second solemn circumcision which that people did observe after their deliverance out of *Egypt:* therefore, without running to this answer, one needs only follow the idea we have already made use of, which is drawn from God's design of keeping up a spirit of jealousy, by some conformity betwixt the circumcision practised by the *Jews*, and the ceremonies used amongst those rival nations.

Why then were some of the neighbouring nations of *Canaan* descended from *Abraham*, circumcised? As, for example, the *Ismaelites* in *Arabia* who were circumcised at thirteen years of age; the posterity of *Abraham* by *Keturah*, viz. the *Midianites*, who were in the country of *Moab*, and the *Edomites*, descended from *Esau*, who did all practise circumcision.

Certainly, it is evident, that as God set the *Israelites* in the midst of all those nations, who by virtue of their ancestors birthright, or some other pretensions, put in their claim with the *Jews* to the execution of the promise, on purpose to excite the attention of this people who were surrounded with these rivals, so he did for the same reason permit that the *Ismaelites*, the *Midianites*, and *Edomites*, should practise the ceremony of circumcision, almost in the same manner that the *Israelites* did.

But that we may the better apprehend the force of this reflexion, we need only consider the jealousy which is caused amongst the several sects of Christians, by the conformity of sacraments; which is so far from uniting them with one another, as it might justly be expected, that on the contrary, one may say, that this conformity in some things alienates them from one another, and breeds reciprocal jealousies amongst their several parties, especially when they come to reflect upon the other controverted articles that cause the separation.

Moreover, it is reasonable to consider that God had provided a sufficient distinction betwixt that people and other nations, by giving them

man

ıy other laws, which had no other visible use than that of *discrimi-on*; as, for instance, the three great feasts which the *Jews* were ged to keep.

The feast of the passover was the memorial of the accomplishment of d's promise to *Abraham* to deliver his posterity out of the country erein they were to be in bondage after 430 years; and consequently ld not be observed by the *Ismaelites*, nor by the *Edomites*, who had er been captives in, nor delivered out of *Egypt*, in the fourth gene-on.

The *Pentecost* was a public monument of the promulgation of the , and all its parts, amongst the children of *Israel*, and consequently uliar to that nation.

Thus the feast of tabernacles preserved the memory of that solemn on of the *Israelites* continuance for forty years in the desert.

t were needless, after such remarkable distinctions, to observe here, hich yet was certainly designed for that end) that God took care to inguish that people by some injunctions, which they were to observe, the fashion of their clothes, of their beard, of their philacteries, of ir mezouzoth, of their thaleth, of their zizith, and many the like ngs, the observance of all which served to hinder any confusion of people of *Israel* with their neighbours.

CHAP. XVI.

at the Law of MOSES *engaged the* JEWS *to the Study of their Genealogies, that they might certainly know that of the Messiah.*

BUT if God took care to distinguish his people from all other na-tions by such an indelible mark, in the practice whereof there was fear of any trick; seeing no man would circumcise himself without nking upon it more than once, as the history of the *Sichemites* assures ; so one sees, that he took as great a care to divide them into tribes, d the tribes into families, that they might subsist and continue in a nd of a separation from one another, although they were at first but e single family, and one single nation.

Now to what purpose, I pray, were all those distinctions, if they had t been designed to manifest the Messiah at his coming?

We see then, that they could have no other use; for, as God had creed that the Messiah should be born out of the tribe of *Judah*, so it s necessary that the several genealogies of that tribe should be very blicly known.

And therefore one sees that God secured this, not only with all cessary care, but even with a caution greater than could have been sonably desired.

He engages all the tribes of *Israel* to preserve with a kind of affecta-

tion, their ſeveral genealogical tables; he neglects none of the means that might be uſeful to diſtinguiſh the tribe of *Judah* from other tribes, and the family from which the Meſſiah was to be deſcended from all the other families of the ſame tribe.

Indeed I am not ignorant that anciently one might ſee ſome other nations uſing the diſtinctions of tribes amongſt themſelves, much after the ſame manner as the *Jews* did, and that they were careful to preſerve their genealogies in order to derive their original from the ſame common father; thus we ought to underſtand what we read in hiſtory of the tribes amongſt the *Athenians*. Thus *Hippocrates* runs up his own pedigree to the twentieth man of his anceſtors, and *Herodotus* mentions ſeveral inſtances of the ſame care.

But one ſees that this affectation was infinitely greater among the *Jews*.

For we ſee, that they did not only rank themſelves every one under the ſtandard of their own tribe, at their going forth out of *Egypt*, but that God did alſo engage every man to know his tribe exactly; nay, he compelled them all, in a manner, to ſtudy their own pedigrees, that every one might claim, and reap the benefit of the law of *Jubilee*, which had the force of an entail in reſpect of every family, as I am now going to ſhew.

There are three things obſervable in that matter.

The firſt is, that it was by a ſuperabundant precaution, that God would engage the tribes to continue diſtinguiſhed from one another, and to preſerve and ſtudy their ſeveral pedigrees; namely, he intended by that means to prevent the objection which might otherwiſe have been made, that it was impoſſible for a tribe, and a family in that tribe, to continue diſtinguiſhed from the reſt of the nation, for ſo many ages; for certainly, if all the tribes in that nation, and all the families in every tribe, did continue, by God's providence, ſo long diſtinguiſhed from one another, there is no doubt to be made, but he could preſerve the ſingle tribe of *Judah*, and the family of the Meſſiah, diſtinguiſhed from all other tribes and families of the people of *Iſrael*.

The ſecond remark is, that it was for this diſtinction ſake, that the books of the Old Teſtament were filled with genealogical tables: to what purpoſe elſe had books of that importance, and wich treated of ſuch great ſubjects, been filled with genealogies? *Moſes*'s books are full of them: the firſt book of Chronicles reſumes thoſe genealogies with all poſſible exactneſs: there is nothing more conſiderable in the book of *Ruth*, than the genealogy of *David* and his family.

The third remark is, that if the genealogy of the prieſts ſeem to have been better known than that of other families, by reaſon of their being the public miniſters of religion, which ſeems to give the advantage of certainty of diſtinction to the tribe of *Levi* above that of *Judah*, in that particular; yet we find, that all the families of the whole nation took much the ſame care to preſerve their own genealogies; ſo that if, after the *Babylonian* captivity, ſome particular perſons were excluded from the prieſtly order, to which they pretended, becauſe they could not make out their pedigree, ſo likewiſe all were thrown out from the other tribes, that could not juſtify their lineal deſcent.

Nay,

Nay, there is ſomething further, deſerves to be taken notice of, as ng very ſingular, in that of *Judah*; and one ought here to conſider a ſtery of God's providence, and admire the wiſdom of his conduct, in rſuing the deſign which *Moſes* firſt ſets down, and upon which one s that the whole *Jewiſh* ſtate was formed; for when God reſolved t the Meſſiah ſhould deſcend from the tribe of *Judah*, and the houſe *David*, he made it more particularly known and diſtinguiſhed than y other family in the whole nation, and for that reaſon he ſets *David* on the throne.

Every one knows, that in every kingdom the genealogy of a king, d of the royal family, is, of all others, the moſt publicly known. Now, if the blood-royal alone is always diſtinguiſhed, how much ore muſt it be ſo, when that ſupreme dignity is conferred upon ſuch a nily, as God had particularly choſen, to have the Meſſiah, who is ſet rth as the deſire of all nations, to be born out of it!

From hence I will boldly conclude, that the only end for which God ſed *David*'s family to the throne, was becauſe the Meſſiah was really be born out of that family, reduced to a low and private condition, hich *Iſaiah* foretold, ſaying, That *a rod ſhould come forth out of the ſtem* Jeſſe, *and a branch grow out of his roots* (*f*); and in another place, hat *he ſhould grow up as a root out of a dry ground* (*g*); which was very reeable to the character of a Prophet, and to the low ſtate of humi- tion in which our Saviour was to appear in the world.

CHAP. XVII.

A Solution of ſome Difficulties in theſe Genealogies.

INDEED the diſperſion of the ten tribes ſeems to be a very natural objection, to thoſe who would diſpute the reflexions which I have ready made upon theſe genealogies.

But after all, there is nothing in it but what confirms the more the id reflexions.

And we may ſay, that the entire diſperſion of the whole tribe of *phraim*, and of the others which adhered to it in *Jeroboam*'s rebellion, is myſtery of providence which challenges our admiration, as much as e raiſing up that family to the throne, out of which the Meſſiah was be born.

To apprehend this the better, we need only call to mind the preten- ons of the tribe of *Ephraim*: this *Ephraim* was the younger brother of *anaſſeh*; but *Jacob* had given him the birthright, juſt as *Iſaac* before d given it to *Jacob*, though it did of right belong to the elder brother. *Jacob* had particularly bleſſed *Ephraim*, and even made it a form of eſſing for after-ages, as we read in the book of *Ruth*, that there was one

(*f*) Iſa. xi. (*g*) Iſa. liii.

one made for *Pharez*. *Jacob* had given to *Joseph* two portions in the land of *Canaan*, and *Ephraim* had the birthright before *Manasseh*, by God's order: it was then very natural for the tribe of *Ephraim*, as all tribes did apply to themselves the several privileges promised to their respective heads, to look upon themselves as having a particular right to God's blessing.

And they thought this right of theirs was plainly made out, as by *Joseph*'s dreams, so especially by the words of that prediction which *Jacob* gave in favour of *Ephraim*, the words of which ran so very high, that after such a prejudice, there might very well be a fair pretence for the hope which the tribe of *Ephraim* had once to see a Messiah come out of their tribe, as those of *Judah* expected one out of theirs.

If to all this we add, that *Jeroboam*'s rebellion was authorised by a prophetical inspiration, and by a special sign of God's approbation; and that on the other hand he desired to propose to his people the two calves which he set up in *Dan* and *Bethel*, as symbols of the Deity, only to pursue the ideas of *Pharaoh*'s dreams, which *Joseph* interpreted, the representation whereof did clearly shew both the greatness of *Joseph*, and the particular care of God's providence over him (*b*); it was then natural to the men of *Ephraim*, to feed themselves with such hopes, as the *Jews* teach us they did, when, even to this very day, they speak of a Messiah of the tribe of *Ephraim*.

What did God then do, to obviate these pretensions of the tribe of *Ephraim?* He dispersed them, together with the other nine tribes that submitted to the authority of its kings, and so confounded them with all those tribes which followed their fortune, that, though there should be still some *Ephraimites* in the world, yet it would be impossible for any of them to justify his pedigree so clearly, as that any Messiah really descended from that very tribe, could, by establishing his genealogy, put his being of the tribe of *Ephraim* beyond all contest.

Now, according to this notion of things, it is visible (if we may be allowed to enter into the counsels of God) that he did particularly preserve the tribes of *Levi* and *Benjamin*, with the tribe of *Judah*, which was the only tribe that was to be preserved of necessity.

First, because, as St. *Paul* to the *Hebrews* observes, there was nothing ever said, as to the Messiah, of the tribe of *Levi*.

Secondly, because God would, by that means, confound the more effectually all the claims of the tribe of *Ephraim*.

For, in short, if the tribe of *Ephraim* was invested by God with the kingdom over nine tribes of the people of *Israel*, so had the tribe of *Benjamin* been raised up before to the sovereignty over all *Israel*, over the tribe of *Judah*, and even that of *Ephraim* itself.

If the tribe of *Ephraim* was descended from a younger brother, to whom *Jacob* had given his blessing, in prejudice of *Manasseh* his elder brother, (which is considerable, because God hath almost constantly preferred the younger before the elder) so the tribe of *Benjamin* was descended from him that was both the younger brother of *Joseph* himself, and the youngest of all *Jacob*'s children; notwithstanding which, the tribe of *Benjamin*

(*b*) *Talm. in Succa, c. 5. in Gem.*

jamin did freely yield to the tribe of *Judah*, and granted that the ry of giving birth to the Messiah, was wholly due to them.

Be it as it will, there are two reflexions more which must be made cerning these genealogies, which appear very natural in this place.

The first is, that both St. *Matthew* and St. *Luke* do begin their Gos- with the genealogy of the Messiah.

The other is, that some time after St. *Paul* condemns the study of ealogies, which was still much in use among the *Jews*, as vain. ny therefore is there such a different conduct amongst the disciples of same master?

Certainly, whoever shall consider with attention the grounds which ave laid down before, must acknowledge, that both St. *Matthew*, l St. *Luke*, ought to have begun their books, as they have done, with genealogy of the Messiah.

For, first of all, it was necessary that the descent of the Messiah from *raham* by *David*, should be clearly made out: it was requisite there- e that they should set down such a genealogy as was known by the ole *Jewish* nation: now this they have done with very great care; l the thing was so easy, and so well known, that even a blind man of e neighbourhood of *Samaria*, the chief city of the kings of *Ephraim*, l publicly call *Jesus* the son of *David*.

But, on the other side, St. *Paul*'s forbidding the study of genealogies, es not at all contradict the method of those two Evangelists.

In short, he pursues the very same notions: he saw, that the converted *ws* applied themselves to the study of genealogies, which was then great a part of the study of their nation: it is still practised among e *Jews* to that degree, that since their dispersion they gave an exact re- on of all the Doctors and Rabbies amongst them who have preserved e tradition, and who were proselites of justice (*i*). What therefore as to be done in this case? He took it for granted, that God had en- ged every *Jew* to study his own pedigree with care, for no other end t only to have that of the Messiah distinctly known whenever he ould come.

But the use of these genealogies being once over, by the Messiah's ming into the world, he observes, with reason, that it was no longer ecessary to keep up the vain study of all those genealogies.

So that we see he speaks against the study of pedigrees, much upon e same grounds as in other places he inveighs against circumcision; r since the chiefest use of genealogies, as well as of circumcision, was distinguish *Abraham*'s posterity from the rest of mankind, till the Messiah was come, the use of these two observations was naturally to ease after he was once come.

It is, no doubt, for the same reason, that whereas the *Jews* in the postle's time took great care, upon all occasions, to take notice of the ibe from which they were descended, as well as to set down the names their fathers; yet one sees that the Apostles did not all affect it. nd if St. *Paul* mentions his being a *Benjamite*, it was for a particu- r reason; for otherwise, as he preached down the distinction betwixt *Jews*

(*i*) *Maimon. Præf. ad Jad. Chazaka.*

Jews and *Gentiles*, ſo he declared himſelf with the ſame earneſtneſ againſt the diſtinctions which were obſerved amongſt their tribes.

CHAP. XVIII.

That the Manner whereby the Law of MOSES *fixed the People of* ISRAEL *to the Land of* CANAAN, *was to keep them ſeparated from other Nations.*

ONE of the chiefeſt means which God made uſe of to diſtinguiſh his people of *Iſrael* from the reſt of mankind, was ſo to fix their affections upon the land of *Canaan*, that they ſhould look upon it as a country which belonged to them by a particular conceſſion from God, which derogated from the *Canaanites* right, to whom that country fell in the diviſion of the earth that was made amongſt the children of *Noah*, or which re-eſtabliſhed the poſterity of *Shem* in their juſt rights, to whom, if we may credit the ancient tradition, related by St. *Epiphanius* (*k*), this country did really belong by virtue of that diviſion amongſt the three ſons of *Noah*, though afterwards they were driven out of it by the poſterity of *Ham*.

Moſes ſeems to have expreſſed this truth, when he ſaith, *Gen.* xii. that when *Abraham* came to *Canaan*, the *Canaanite* was already in the land; that is, he had already invaded it: neither can we refer what he relates in the xivth chapter, concerning the war which the kings from the eaſt came to make againſt the king of *Sodom* and *Gomorrha*, to any thing elſe.

It was then, for this reaſon, that long before *Moſes*'s time, God took *Abraham* out of *Chaldea*, from amongſt *Shem*'s poſterity, to bring him into *Canaan* amongſt the *Hivites*, the *Amorites*, and other nations all equally deſcended from *Ham*, whom God had curſed.

God could have placed *Abraham* any where elſe; but he choſe to bring him into a country which the poſterity of *Ham* had ſeized upon already, rather than into a place poſſeſſed by the poſterity of *Japhet*, on purpoſe that the jealouſy might be the greater betwixt *Abraham* and the inhabitants of the country into which God had brought him.

Nevertheleſs, God did not give him at firſt an entire poſſeſſion, but only promiſed him that his poſterity ſhould enjoy it, and in the meanwhile inveſted him, beforehand, with a right to it, by the purchaſe of a field for a burying-place, wherein his wife, himſelf, and his children, were buried; by which means he ſtrongly fixed his own mind, and the hopes of his poſterity.

In ſhort, it is evident, that all the glory which *Jacob* found in *Egypt*, when he was invited thither by *Joſeph*, did not make him forget the right which he claimed upon that land, by virtue of the ſepulchre both of his father and grandfather, that was there. For *Moſes* informs us, that he deſired to be carried thither after his death, and that he did expreſsly re-

quire

(*k*) Hæreſ. lxvi. n. 84.

re this duty from *Joseph* and his other children, who paid it in so very
mn a manner, and with a mourning so very great and famous, that
name of *Abel-Mizraim* continued to that very place where the *Ca-*
nites saw the solemnization of that funeral by the sons of *Jacob*, who
e attended by great numbers of *Egyptians*.

One sees that *Jacob*'s children still entertained the same hope: *Joseph*
mnly engaged his children to carry his bones into the land of *Canaan*:
one may judge that the other Patriarchs were not less solicitous to
uire the same office at the hands of their children, as St. *Stephen* (*l*)
poses it, *Acts* vii. agreeably to the common opinion of the *Jews*: all
ich shews, that *Abraham*'s posterity had their hearts set upon his se-
chre, as upon the pledge and security of God's promise, that they
uld be once possessed of that land where he was buried.

And as the carrying the body of *Jacob* into *Canaan*, sufficiently shewed
at were the claims of the *Israelites*; so the same was very evident by
ir care in keeping themselves unmixed with the *Egyptians*, all the time
y sojourned in *Egypt*. The splendor of *Joseph* was a natural engage-
nt for them to settle themselves there for ever: besides, their vast
rease forced them in a manner to it. For a long time the miseries
ich they endured, invited them to seek the alliances of the *Egyptians*
marriages, and to mix themselves with a people who were their
sters, and so to renounce hopes which appeared to be so very ground-
. They seemed to have been warranted by *Joseph*'s example, who
married an *Egyptian*. However, one never finds that they tried that
thod. One sees on the contrary, that there was little correspondence
ween the *Hebrews* and *Egyptians* in their sacred things: for the
brews sacrificed to God the abomination of the *Egyptians*, that is,
ose very things which the *Egyptians* worshipped.

One sees afterwards, by the great number of *flocks* which they drove
ng with them at their going out of *Egypt*, that they had continued to
low the profession of their ancestors, who were shepherds, a very
ous employment to the *Egyptians*.

One sees at last, that after the many miracles which *Moses* wrought
the *Egyptian* court, this people followed God's conduct, and went
of that country, to possess the land of *Canaan*, which none of them
l ever seen; and yet they looked upon the obtaining it as a blessing
y could not miss of.

There are several things very remarkable upon that subject.

The first is, that some *Egyptians* went out with the *Israelites* to dwell
th them in the land of *Canaan*; which was done, not only that there
ght be some indisputable witnesses, from among the enemies of God, of
truth and greatness of the miracles which *Moses* had wrought amongst
m, which also was a presage of the calling of the *Gentiles* to the faith,
their insertion into the body of the *Jews*; but also that there might
some witnesses of the extraordinary affection which the people of
el had for the land of *Canaan*, and of their claims to it by virtue of
d's promise, that he would put them into possession of it. For other-
e it is not a common thing that a colony of slaves should be suffered
run away, much less that they should persuade their masters to forsake
their

(*l*) *Jalkut. ex Sipbre.* fol. 311. col. 2.

their own country, and their ſettlements at home, to go and conquer another for them.

The ſecond remark is, that God made the *Jews* travel for forty years in the deſerts of *Arabia*, not only to make them forget any ties they might have had to return again into *Egypt*, and to accuſtom them to depend wholly upon Divine providence, but alſo to redouble their deſires after the poſſeſſion of this land of promiſe.

It was for the ſame reaſon that God forbad them ſo ſtraitly either the mingling with, or the ſettling themſelves amongſt, the *Midianites*, though *Moſes* had given an example by marrying *Sephora*; or the *Edomites*, or the *Iſmaelites*, or the *Moabites*, or the *Ammonites*, though all thoſe nations were deſcended from *Terah*, their common father, or from the Patriarchs.

In execution of which ſevere prohibition, God commanded the *Jews* to put all thoſe to the ſword who ſhould make any alliance with thoſe nations, as we have inſtance of it, *Numb.* xxiii. after the deſcription of *Balaam*'s prophecies.

And it could be for no other end that he ſo ſtraitly charged the *Iſraelites* to cut off the *Hivites*, *Amorites*, and other nations of *Canaan*, even to the women and little children, but in purſuance of his firſt deſign to prevent all mixture of his people with thoſe nations, which without that extreme rigour would infallibly and inſenſibly have come to paſs.

I know very well that God preſerved the *Gibeonites*, by ratifying that alliance which gave leave to thoſe people, though of the poſterity of *Ham*, to continue amongſt his own people in the land of *Canaan*; but though God did in effect preſerve the *Gibeonites* amongſt the *Jews*, yet he forced them to undergo the drudgery, and ſervile offices of the tabernacle, and that they might be kept, as unqueſtionable witneſſes of the *Hebrews* pretenſions, and of their miraculous conqueſt of the land of *Canaan*; for the continuance of that nation in the heart of the country, and their ſubmitting to the drudgery of carrying wood and water for the uſe of the tabernacle, though they were at firſt of another religion, was, as I have obſerved already, a continual ſubject of admiration to the poſterity both of the *Jews* and of the *Gibeonites* themſelves.

CHAP. XIX.

That the Law tied the people of ISRAEL *to the Land of* CANAAN, *and by ſeveral other Means eſtabliſhed the Diſtinction betwixt Tribes and Families amongſt them.*

ONE may ſay, that one of the moſt effectual means which God uſed to fix his people to the land of *Canaan*, was the law which he gave them to meet thrice a year, and celebrate three ſolemn feaſts together, which

ich hardly gave them leave to travel far into other countries, and aged them, every time they met, to renew, in the public acts of ir religion, the memory and the ideas of their hopes: and they con-ed to this deſign of God in this manner.

Thoſe feaſts were celebrated at three times, which were the moſt com-dious ſeaſons of the year for travelling, betwixt the months of *March* l *October*: the celebration of the paſſover was upon the fourteenth after the appearance of the moon in *March*; the pentecoſt was fifty s after; and the feaſt of the tabernacles laſted from the firſt to the th day of *September*.

In ſhort, the law which obliged the *Jews* to aſſiſt at the celebration thoſe feaſts, required the appearance of all the males of twenty years age and upwards, ſo very rigorouſly, that there was no diſpenſation; all (without exception) were then obliged to appear: ſo that, even ring the diſperſions of their nation, the *Jews* who lived out of *Judea* iſted always at the celebration of thoſe three feaſts with great care.

This was a viſible way of keeping the tribes of *Iſrael* diſtinct, by ving each of them a ſeparate portion in the land of *Canaan*, and by ing them inſeparably to it; as the whole nation was in like manner ſtinguiſhed, by its being placed in a country entirely by itſelf.

We ſee accordingly, that God hath obſerved that method, by giving law which enjoins the diviſion of the land of *Canaan* to be made into many portions as there were tribes, only excepting the tribe of *Levi*, cauſe the *Levites*, as being the public miniſters of their religion, were ſperſed amongſt the other tribes, that they might more conveniently tend to the inſtruction of the people.

I ſhall not here take notice of the miracle which was evident in that viſion, which was an exact accompliſhment of the oracle which *Jacob* d *Moſes* uttered a little before their deaths.

But I ſhall obſerve, firſt, that as the deſign of God was to divide that ople into tribes, that the tribe of *Judah*, from which the Meſſiah was be born, might be the better diſtinguiſhed and known, ſo he would, r the ſame reaſon, allot the cave of *Machpelah*, the ſepulchre of the atriarchs, to the ſhare of the tribe of *Judah*, as alſo *Ephratah*, the ace where *Rachel* was buried, which was afterwards called *Bethlehem*, e town where *David* had his birth, and which was foretold by the Pro-het *Micah* under the name of *Ephratah*, as the place where the Meſ-ah ſhould be born in the fulneſs of time.

We muſt beſides take notice of two particular regulations, by which God fixed his people in the land of *Canaan*, and preſerved a diſtinct idea f this firſt diviſion of that country.

The firſt is the law of *jubilee*.

The ſecond is the law of lineal retreats.

In ſhort, by the law of the jubilee, which returned every fifty years, nd by which every one that could juſtify his pedigree, was reinſtated the poſſeſſions of his anceſtors, God obliged that people to keep up a iſtinct knowledge of the firſt diviſion made under *Joſhua* (*m*), and hich is deſcribed in that book which contains his hiſtory, much more ffectually than if he had made a law for that very purpoſe: ſo that, though the

(*m*) Joſhua xiv, &c.

the field of *Ephratah* had been never ſo often alienated, yet it always returned to the tribe of *Judah*, and ſo afterwards into *David*'s family, becauſe it was at firſt the lot of his anceſtors.

This law of jubilee preſerved a diſtinct knowledge of the ſeveral tribes and families; and it alſo kept up a diſtinct idea of their genealogies, which muſt be preſerved entire of neceſſity, that they might maintain their right to the inheritance of their anceſtors.

It would be to no purpoſe to object againſt this obſervation, that it was impoſſible to know certainly which tribe, and much leſs which family, every eſtate did belong to, becauſe one ſees that the firſt proſelytes who went out with the *Iſraelites*, ſhared the land of *Canaan* together with them: for one ſees on the contrary,

Firſt, that God would not allow any of the *Moabites* and *Ammonites* to become proſelytes before the tenth generation;

And ſecondly, that he debarred the *Edomites* from being admitted to make profeſſion of Judaiſm before the third generation, which excluded them for ever from any poſſeſſions in the land of *Canaan*.

And thirdly, one ought to obſerve the difference betwixt an *Egyptian* proſelyte, and a native *Jew*: the quality of a proſelyte gave permiſſion to an *Egyptian* to live amongſt the *Jews*, and to profeſs their religion; but it gave him no right to poſſeſs any of their land.

And then, beſides that, thoſe *Egyptian* proſelytes had a particular way of praying by themſelves, different from that of the *Jews*, as the *Jews* ſtill teſtify (*n*). They could not poſſeſs any eſtate in land amongſt them: this is ſo true, that it was once found neceſſary to make a particular regulation for the daughters of *Zelophehad* (*o*), that they might have their diviſion, which was granted only under certain conditions, becauſe the land was not to be divided, but amongſt the males of the people of *Iſrael*.

But this is very conſiderable, that, by this law of the jubilee, God fixed the *Jews* to the land of *Canaan*, by giving the children a power to look upon themſelves, not only as the preſumptive heirs of their parents, but to conſider their parents only as *uſufructuaries*, ſince all their poſſeſſions in land were ſo entailed, that the children, or right heirs of any man, could not miſs of the reverſion; becauſe, whatever alienation was made, it could laſt but for a time, to the year of jubilee, which reſtored all the alienated poſſeſſions, abſolutely and entirely, to the right heirs.

Now, that this law was always looked upon as a fundamental law amongſt the *Jews*, appears clearly from the words in *Leviticus* (*p*), and from the hiſtory of *Naboth*, which holy man rather choſe to die than to comply with the injuſt deſire of *Ahab*, who would have forced *Naboth* to ſell his eſtate abſolutely, notwithſtanding God's expreſs prohibition.

The exemplary vengeance which God took upon *Naboth*'s murder, and the relation of it recorded in Scripture, is a further confirmation of this ſame truth: if a king of *Iſrael* durſt not at firſt infringe that law, if it was not violated by any other than *Jeſabel*, who was a foreign princeſs; if the tranſgreſſion of that law was puniſhed in ſuch an exemplary manner;

(*n*) *Maſſa Biccour.* c. 1. S. 4.
(*o*) Numb. xxvii.
(*p*) Leviticus xxv. 23. 1 Kings xxi.

er; who can doubt but that it was particularly obſerved in the tribe
dah, as a fundamental law by which God tied up his people inſe-
ly to this very country?
ne needs only make ſome few reflexions upon thoſe words which
makes uſe of, *Ezek.* xlvi. to agree to what I ſay, if thoſe reflexions
h I have made already upon *Naboth*'s murder be alſo added to
.
ne may obſerve upon the ſame ſubject, that though God had ſeveral
ſubjected the *Jews* to a foreign power, yet he never ſuffered the
e nation to be all carried away out of *Canaan* at one time, nor yet
ntinue in captivity for the time of two whole jubilees; they were
eventy years in *Babylon*, which was the furtheſt place that they
ever carried into.
om whence we may naturally conclude, that their genealogies could
e confounded in ſo ſhort a time, becauſe many that were at the
cration of the ſecond temple had ſeen the firſt: nor could the di-
t knowledge of the ſeveral diviſions of their eſtates be obliterated;
uſe thoſe of every tribe who continued ſtill in the land, might viſibly
them up.
nd we here of neceſſity ought to obſerve in the firſt place, what we
read in the xxxiid chapter of *Jeremiah* (*q*), concerning the ſale of
d which *Jeremiah* bought:
nd ſecondly, what we read *Nehem.* the vth, where he is troubled to
he alienation of their fields, which was a conſequence of their
y:
nd thirdly, the manner how that people were reſtored to their eſtates,
rding to the fundamental laws of their ſtate.
nother very effectual means to fix that people to the land of *Canaan*,
to preſerve their families there certainly without confuſion, was the
of lineal retreats, which God inſtituted for this very purpoſe.
or in ſhort, when this rule was once laid down, that upon the fai-
of an heir in any family, the next kinſman was the heir at law,
pears plainly, that every one was obliged, for his own intereſt, to
ire with diligence into the genealogical lives of his own tribe, that
ight inſtruct himſelf in the ſtate of the ſeveral families of his kin-
, and of the ſeveral degrees of proximity of blood whereby they
t be related, becauſe the exact knowledge of theſe liſts, and of thoſe
al degrees of kindred, were abſolutely neceſſary to make uſe of this
t of lineal retreats.
here were two other laws which contributed alſo to this; one where-
gulated all that was to be done, when there were none but daugh-
left in a family: a famous inſtance of which, we have in the hiſtory
e daughters of *Zelophehad*, ſet down twice by *Moſes*, on purpoſe, no
t, that it ſhould be the more taken notice of, as I intend to ſhew
icularly in another place.
he other law regulated all that the next kinſman of any one that died
dleſs, was obliged to do in reſpect of the relict, and of the eſtate of
deceaſed, if he intended to redeem it. One finds in the book of
Ruth,

(*q*) *Jerem.* xxxii.

Ruth, an illuſtrious example of the execution of this law, which may be found *Deuter.* xxv.

Now after all this, let any one judge, whether there could be any ſtronger ties than theſe, to oblige the people of *Iſrael* to continue in the land of *Canaan*; and whether the diviſion which God made of it, betwixt their ſeveral tribes and families, was not an infallible means to diſtinguiſh them certainly one from another.

CHAP. XX.

That the Laws which MOSES *made concerning the State of Virginity, did principally relate alſo to the* MESSIAH, *which holds alſo as to ſeveral other Laws.*

HITHERTO I have ſhewed the care which God took to diſtinguiſh his people of *Iſrael* from all other nations of the world; and I afterwards ſhewed what care he took to keep the diſtinctions which he firſt ſet up amongſt the tribes; and I afterwards explained thoſe laws which he gave, to oblige every family in each tribe to remain diſtinct; and I afterwards made it manifeſt, that the diviſion of the land of *Canaan* was a very proper means to execute this deſign of God.

All which ſhews, that God intended to make it eaſy for every man to diſtinguiſh the Meſſiah, when it it ſhould be once known that he was to be born out of the family of *Jeſſe*, as it was afterwards foretold by ſeveral expreſs oracles.

But as there ought to be ſomething ſupernatural in the birth of the Meſſiah, who was to be born of a Virgin, ſo we ought to ſee what care God took in his laws, that the birth of the Meſſiah, even in this very article, might not be a fact too difficult to be acknowledged and eſtabliſhed.

In the firſt promiſe which God made to man in theſe words, *That the ſeed of the woman ſhould bruiſe the ſerpent's head*, being joined with *Iſaiah*'s prophecy, *Behold, a virgin ſhall conceive*, &c. *If.* vii. it is viſible, that for the accompliſhment of theſe oracles, one ought to ſuppoſe that the Meſſiah muſt be born of a virgin, as the Chriſtians profeſs to believe. Why ſhould God otherwiſe have taken care, to inſinuate, from the very beginning of the world, that the Meſſiah was to be born of the ſeed of a woman, without mentioning any thing of a man, if he had not ſuppoſed that he ſhould be born without the operation of a man? And why ſhould *Iſaiah* propoſe the conceiving of a virgin, as an effect wholly ſupernatural?

In ſhort, God did therefore by his laws not only ſecure the ſtate of virginity, that this thing might not be ambiguous when it ſhould be accompliſhed, but (as we ſhall ſee here) he has by theſe laws made it extremely illuſtrious.

First, besides that, God would have the punishment of death inflicted on them that were at any time found guilty of sins against nature, as o upon them that should be proved to have had any incestuous commerce with those that were nearly related to them, and to whom either nearness of blood, or affinity, gave them a more free and familiar ess. He moreover straitly commanded, that all prostitutes should put to death without any mercy (*r*).

Secondly, he is not contented to forbid fornication and adultery general, by condemning to death those that expressly should be convicted of it, and by awarding the same sentence against him that should pen to corrupt a contracted virgin, and the virgin herself (*s*); but also hinders men, by two ways, from falling into sins of impurity; he mitted, on the one hand, a divorce where the wife did not please her sband, and on the other hand he allowed of polygamy. This toleran made that virgins, on the one side, not remaining too long unmard, were not easily to be corrupted; and, on the other side, men were t very forward to debauch those women whom they did not intend to rry, or to keep when married; for he that was compelled to marry a gin whom he had seduced, was expressly forbidden to put her away ever after (*t*).

It is natural to observe the design of those laws amongst the people of *Jews* (*u*). In short, the desire of issue made them marry very young; st of the men were married at eighteen years of age.

Therefore all virgins thought it a shame to be unmarried; therefore od makes them speak, in the third of *Isaiah*, in that manner, when en women would marry one man, without asking any thing for diet or thes, provided only that he would take away that reproach of living thout having children. It was this desire of posterity which made women look upon barrenness as a curse.

Again, this vehement desire of children made eunuchs to be regarded men particularly abhorred of God, not only by the *Jews*, but also by e Heathens themselves (*x*): although afterwards they passed for holy en, because they designed to imitate what (as they were told) had happened to *Noah*, by his son *Ham*, which introduced the custom amongst e *Assyrians* of castrating themselves, that they might be priests.

Thirdly, God commanded, that any virgin which was betrothed to a sband, and was corrupted in her father's house, or that was ravished thout calling for help, should be punished with death (*y*); so that all e virgins were indispensably engaged, for fear of losing both life and nour together, to preserve their virginity with all possible care.

But here is a fourth law concerning this matter, whereby God obliged e parents of all contracted virgins to take a more than ordinary care of em, when he commands, *Deut.* xxii. 21. *That a virgin for whom the ens of virginity were not found, should be brought out of the door of her father's*

(*r*) Exod. xxii. Deut. xxii. Levit. xviii. Levit. xx. Deut. xxiii. 17.
(*s*) Exod. xxii. Levit. xx. Deut. xii.
(*t*) Deut. xxii. (*u*) *Massec. Avoth.* c. 5.
(*x*) *Lucian. de Eunuch.* p. 537. *Lucian. de Dea Syriâ*, p. 1069.
(*y*) Deut. xxii.

father's house, and there be stoned to death by the men of the city; for so her parents were, by that means, made partakers of the punishment of her crime, and their negligence was severely punished by such a shameful execution as dishonoured their whole family.

Fifthly, God submitted women to the examination of their husbands to whom they were married: nay, one would think that he intended to raise the jealousy of husbands, when he gives them leave to bring their wives to a public trial, and to punish them with death, when they did not preserve the tokens of their virginity.

It was for that reason that he commanded (z), that the parents or near relations of the young married women thus complained of, should produce upon all such occasions the tokens of the virginity of those daughters which they disposed in marriage, which was usually done with many solemn circumstances and formalities.

And here are three things which deserve to be attentively considered.

The first is, the custom that was amongst the *Jews* for parents never to let their virgin daughters go out their houses; which custom made them be called *concealed*, in opposition to those that went abroad, that is, that were prostitutes.

The second is, another custom which the just desire of preserving the virginity of their daughters against all accidents, had introduced amongst that people; which was, that all their virgins did wear a sort of fetters, which are called, in the *Talmud*, *cevalim*, which are described by the famous *Moses*, the son of *Maimon*, in this manner: *Cevalim sunt compedes in forma periscelidis, inter quos interposuerunt catenulas, illis compedibus ornabant se virgines, ut non incederent passu magno, ne contigeret ipsis damnum in virginitate sua* (a). This description may be thought to be one of the foolish fancies of the modern *Jews*, if we did not meet with proofs of the practice of that custom in more ancient times. In short, one sees, in the third of *Isaiah*, that chains are reckoned up amongst other ornaments of the daughters of *Israel*, which God threateneth to take away from them, when he would force them to go captives into *Babylon*.

The third is, an ancient tradition mentioned in the *Pirke Eliezer*, in the sixteenth chapter, *Solent Israelitæ digito educere virginitatem, ne incidant in dubitationem vel suspicionem, juxta illud*, sumat pater & mater puellæ, &c.

In a word, it seems that, for fear lest these tokens of virginity should be thought to be obscure and ambiguous by their husbands, God has provided for the securing of the virginity of their young women before marriage by a miracle, the experience whereof was ordinary and common amongst so jealous a people; I mean, the waters of jealousy (b), which all women, whose carriage was suspected by their husbands, were obliged to drink, by which God did either miraculously justify them, or else he began to inflict a punishment upon them, which was so much the more dreadful and exemplary, as it proceeded from the hand of God himself. This miracle lasted to the destruction of the second temple, as the *Jews* themselves tell us in that title of their *Talmud* (c) which concerns women suspected of adultery.

However,

(z) Deut. xxii.
(a) *Ad Massic. Sabbath.* c. 6. J. 4.
(b) Numb. v. *Joseph.* l. 3. *Antiq* p. 95.
(c) *Sota*, c. 9.

However, as God works no miracles without great reasons, so he ere made a law, the observance whereof was very rigorous; which was, hat he would not suffer any women to be married when there was the east probability that they had their courses, but that they should be eparated at that time, as unclean.

The reason of this law was, because it was then almost impossible but hat the lewd women might have imposed upon their husbands in the harks of their virginity, which at that time are very uncertain; not to ay, that, as a politic lawgiver, he might prescribe the observation of his law, lest the commonwealth of the *Jews* should have been overocked with weak and sickly people.

Lastly, one sees that God himself has fastened a blot upon leprous ersons, because they were supposed to have been conceived when their nothers had their courses (*d*): and hereupon was that law of God ounded, which debarred lepers for ever from the right of coming into he congregation of his people.

One ought to make the same observation upon those that were unlawully begotten; for they were deprived of the right of entering into the ongregation; and how innocent soever they were, as to the lewdness f those who gave them their lives, yet they were thus with them made artakers of the punishment of their sin.

If one considers all these several laws attentively, one shall find, on he one hand, that several of them were of very little moment, except ve suppose that God intended to secure the state of virginity by them eyond all danger; and on the other hand, one shall find that some of hem are very severe about things which do not seem to deserve so terible a rigour.

But if we consider them according to God's design, as he hath afterards particularly explained it, they will appear, I am confident, to e all very worthy of the wisdom of such a lawgiver.

One needs only reflect upon that method of God that I have now xplained, to see that nothing can be conceived to be better managed, han this model according to the design which God himself had drawn.

One may make the same observations, and examine the same strokes f the wisdom of God, in several other precautions which he made use f to make the Messiah be perfectly distinguished according to the several haracters under which he was to be proposed afterwards by the ministry f the Prophets.

One sees that the Messiah, being to be born of a virgin, was to be a irst-born; and for that reason, we find many laws which distinguish in eneral the privileges of the first-born.

So it appears, by the xviiith of *Deuteronomy*, that the Messiah was to e a Prophet; and therefore God afterwards gave notice by the Prohets of all those lights which should particularly appear in him. In rospect of this, God gave, by the ministry of *Moses*, such characters s would distinguish the true Prophets from those who endeavoured to usurp that name.

It appears also, that because God was to communicate to the Messiah, a power

(*d*) *Isidor. Pelus*, l. 5. Ep. 117. *Joseph. Antiq.* l. 3. p. 94.

a power of working miracles (which *Moſes* intimates, by ſaying that he was to be a Prophet like unto him), therefore *Iſaiah* ſpecifies the character of thoſe miracles in chapter xxxv. of his prophecy; and God explains, in particular, the laws concerning the blind and the lame; and for the ſame reaſon, he gives an account of all ſorts of leproſy, that it might be diſtinctly known which was incurable.

It is eaſy to thoſe who will attend to the law of *Moſes*, to ſee that they were ſubſervient to this deſign of God, in purſuance of thoſe proſpects which we have already ſet down.

CHAP. XXI.

That it was the Deſign of God, by all theſe Ceremonies, and particularly by that Veneration which he inſpired the JEWS *with, for the Tabernacle, to preſerve the Ideas of the Meſſiah, whom he had promiſed, in their Minds, by diſtinguiſhing them from all other Nations.*

AFTER all thoſe obſervations which I have made upon the ſeveral laws that God made uſe of to execute his deſign of fixing his people to a certain place, and there to keep them ſeparate, it is natural to judge, that the ceremonial laws which he gave them for the regulating their outward worſhip, were alſo intended for the ſame end. This I muſt ſhew, in reſpect of the holineſs which God aſcribes to the land of *Canaan*, and in reſpect of the whole ſervice of the tabernacle, of its myſterious conſtruction in all its parts; and in reſpect alſo of the raiſing of the material temple, afterwards, to be as it were the centre of their whole religion.

It was certainly for this purpoſe that he particularly conſecrated ſeveral things to himſelf, as the firſt fruits, and the firſt-born; and that he ſet apart certain times, as the firſt day of the month, and certain ſolemn feaſts, beſides the ſabbath-day, which were celebrated long before. And he alſo conſecrated ſeveral places, as the towns of refuge; and yet more particularly, the tabernacle and the temple: but it was eſpecially for that reaſon, that he had conſecrated certain rites and ceremonies, certain ſacrifices, both of animate and inanimate things, and certain offerings of gold and ſilver, perfumes, &c.

One ſees that he rejected any firſt fruits that did not grow in the land of *Canaan*: one ſees, that though ſome ſacrifices were common to the *Jews* and their neighbours, yet he diſtinguiſhed them by ſo many circumſtances, that they were much different from the others: thus he forbids them to make uſe of ſtatues before which other nations uſed to ſacrifice at that time; and he commanded them not to ſacrifice upon high places, where the heathens uſed to make their offerings very early in the morning, at ſun-riſe, which gave riſe to their worſhip of the riſing ſun.

But there is nothing more diſcovers the deſign of God, than the laws by which he fixed their worſhip, firſt to the tabernacle, and afterwards

to

the temple, at the places where God did particularly reſide. One y ſay, that it was for that reaſon God commanded the repreſenta- ns of angels, and of his law, and of the manna, to be preſerved there; which, beſides that they were memorials of the ancient apparitions d favours of God to that people, were expreſs figures of God's ry, of his will, and of his miraculous power: he added alſo a can- ſtick with ſeven branches, a table covered with loaves, and an altar incenſe, which were figures of the ſeven planets of this viſible world, the bleſſings which we enjoy by nature, and of thoſe acknowledg- nts which we owe unto God for all theſe: he commanded alſo, that ne ſhould offer ſacrifices in any other place except the temple.

He would not permit that any but thoſe who were purified according the law ſhould enter into it; he excluded all uncircumciſed perſons ever: as *Moſes* had formerly been commanded to pull off his ſhoes in deſert, at his approaching to the burning buſh, ſo every one that en- ed into the temple, was to enter barefoot, as a mark of that reſpect ich had formerly been exacted of *Moſes*.

And what other reaſon but that, could oblige him to give, both at the nſecration of the temple, and afterwards, ſo many ſenſible marks of preſence? That cloud which was called his Glory, reſted there; the *im* and *Thummim*, which was an oracle for that whole nation, was re; there was a daily ſacrifice offered up for the whole people; there re celebrated the three ſolemn feaſts of the paſſover, of pentecoſt, and tabernacles: he forbad them to ſacrifice any where elſe, and he gave quent and illuſtrious oracles at that place.

One ought alſo to obſerve, that after this temple (to which all the ry of the tabernacle was tranſmitted) was fixed at *Jeruſalem*, he or- ed it to be ſuch a ſenſible mark of his preſence, that when we read hiſtory of *Iſrael*'s march in the deſert, we find that the tabernacle s the image of the temple, and built after its model: ſo that as the ernacle always ſtood in the midſt of the tents of the *Levites*, and the *vites* in the midſt of the whole camp of all the tribes of *Iſrael*, who re all liſted under their proper ſtandards; ſo one ſees afterwards, that temple, the *Levites*, and the people of *Jeruſalem*, were placed, ac- ding to their different degrees of holineſs, as they were to approach the moſt holy place, which was the habitation of his holineſs.

Certainly, one may ſay, that the building up of a tabernacle, or of a mple, ſeems to be directly contrary to the nature of religion, accord- g to which, God who is a ſpirit, will be worſhipped in ſpirit, and in th; ſo that this ſeems to have been quitted for a time, when he com- nded the building of a tabernacle.

But really there was nothing more agreeable to the deſign which God d formed at firſt, as to that people: he intended to make it viſible; and appears that nothing could be more effectual to make it ſo, than the uble neceſſity to which that whole people was reduced, to meet in body ſeveral times every year in the ſame place, and to offer all their rifices in the tabernacle, and to be there perpetually employed in the emonial ſervice, which did inſeparably draw them thither, and fix em there.

The end of all thoſe viſible aſſemblies, was to perpetuate the know-

ledge of the principal verities of their religion, and especially to renew perpetually the hopes of that people, as to the Messiah, who was promised to them from God.

For God having shortened the long lives which men commonly enjoyed in the beginning before they went out of *Egypt*, so that five or six persons could no longer preserve the tradition of 2000 years as they had done till *Moses*'s time, God was of necessity obliged to make use of some other means to supply that defect.

He had already made use of several before; amongst which, was that which we find described *Deut.* xxvii. where he ordered the building of an altar with rough stones, whereupon the names of the twelve tribes, and the whole law, were to be engraved:

He afterwards followed other methods; and thus we see that *Samuel*, following *Moses* and *Joshua*'s example, repeats before a solemn assembly of the people met at *Gilgal*, for the consecration of *Saul*, the things that came to pass during the government of *Bedan* or *Sampson*, of *Jephtha* and his own.

But yet the best way was to fix this people to one tabernacle, wherein we see that besides the monuments which preserved the memory of the great miracles that God had wrought at the foundation of the *Jewish* commonwealth, as the pot of manna, *Aaron*'s rod that blossomed, the plates of the altar that had been made out of the censers of *Corah*, *Dathan*, and their confederates—

One sees that the law, and the books of the covenant, were deposited there by God's order, and the principal transactions and deliverances that were wrought by God in the behalf of that people, were continually celebrated with hymns and other tokens of public thankfulness.

It was, no doubt, upon this account, that he caused the book of the law to be laid up there, with many ceremonies and expiations; and that he enjoined it to be read publicly in the presence of the whole congregation every seven years: one sees that he commanded that every family should read this book continually, and that all should entertain their wives and children, from their tenderest years, with the design of the law, night and day, in the country, and in the town, at all times, and in all places.

One sees that God engaged them to it, not only by an express command, but also by an indispensable necessity, because he made it death for any man to violate any of those ceremonial laws, from a principle of obstinacy: no pardon could be obtained for the transgressions committed through ignorance, before they were expiated by certain sacrifices, the forms whereof were scrupulously prescribed in the law, and which could be violated upon no account whatever.

If one considers those things, he may say that the *Jews* had scarce one moment free in their lives; so pressing was the necessity which lay upon them to consult the law of God, the regulations of which were so very exact and particular, that there, no actions, public or private, could happen, but what were regulated and determined by these constitutions.

If a beast was born, the owner was to examine whether it was the first-born,

t-born or no, whether it was clean or unclean, and whether it was be redeemed, with several other things of this nature.

If a woman was big with child, there were many questions to be ed: when she came to lie-in, several very different ceremonies were ctised, according as the child was first-born, or not. The law en- ned various purifications, according as the woman brought forth a n or a daughter.

God had prescribed a great number of laws for all the accidents of e; for marriages, for successions, for funerals, for mourning, for un- eseen accidents, as the death of a man that was killed without the ign of his murderer; for several crimes that might be committed, their several pollutions and sequestrations, &c.

It seems that this whole people, from the time that they came to the e of their reason, to the time of their death, was still continually liged to keep up a correspondence with the priests and *Levites*, whom od had for this purpose dispersed amongst all the tribes of *Israel*, and consult the law and the testimony, to be instructed in the manner of verning themselves; but particularly, they were to look upon the tem- e and the tabernacle as the centre of their whole religion: and how uld they do this, without carrying their prospect at the same time to ose great promises of the Messiah, of which the *Israelites* were depo- aries? I say, upon those promises, which raised up so many jealousies twixt their forefathers and the ancestors of those neighbouring na- ons, with whom they had always some controversy, and were to be nsidered as glorious and honourable to the whole nation.

CHAP. XXII.

hat it appears by the Books of MOSES, *that this whole Model which God had framed, was to last but until the Coming of the Messiah.*

BUT if we find in *Moses*'s law a severe restriction in all that belongs to the execution of the promise of the Messiah (which shews that od intended to have that nation distinguished from all others, till ie blessed seed was come); if we find that he restrained that promise to ne tribe, one town, one family, one particular individual person in at family, that they might not be to seek in a confused crowd of a hole people, made up of several millions of persons, or in a whole ibe, or even in a city filled up with several families; if, upon this ac- ount his birth was restrained to one people, one tribe, one little town, nd one single family which was settled there, the *Jews* could not but bserve that it was God's design to break all those restrictions, and to llow quite another method, when the Messiah was once come.

For, in the first place, the first promise of the Messiah was expressed n very general terms, which mentioned a common benefit to all the sons f *Adam*. This promise was made before God had rejected *Cain*'s poste-

rity, by preferring that of *Seth*; it was made before the reſtriction was made to *Noah* in *Seth*'s family, and to *Shem* in *Noah*'s family.

Secondly, God, who by circumciſion had diſtinguiſhed *Abraham* and his poſterity from the reſt of the family of *Shem*, did expreſsly promiſe to *Abraham*, that in his ſeed all the nations of the world ſhould be bleſſed. This promiſe was made alſo before God had reſtrained the promiſe to the perſon of *Iſaac* in prejudice of *Iſhmael*, and then afterwards to the perſon of *Jacob*, in the prejudice of *Eſau*.

Thirdly, one ſees this ſame truth yet more clearly explained out of *Jacob*'s oracle concerning *Judah*, *Gen.* xlix. wherein *Jacob* expreſsly foretells that the Meſſiah ſhould be the expectation of the nations; that is to ſay, the comfort, the glory, the hope, and the joy of all the nations of the univerſe.

As this was a capital truth, ſo God propoſed it by *Balaam*, at the *Iſraelites* entering into *Canaan*, that they might thus underſtand, that all thoſe diſtinctions which their ſeparation, living in *Canaan* from the reſt of the world, might keep up, were not always to laſt.

But this particular appears out of *Moſes*'s law, which allows of ſeveral ſorts of proſelytes, receiving ſome without tying them to the obſervance of all the ceremonies in the law; which it would never have done, if it had been abſolutely neceſſary to be a *Jew* before they have a ſhare in the benefits of the promiſe.

Secondly, it ſuppoſes that God was to remove that people out of *Canaan* into remote countries, and to diſperſe them, as it were, into the uttermoſt parts of the world, which was done by Divine Providence, only to publiſh the promiſe of the Meſſiah, to eſtabliſh the belief in the Prophets, and ſo to facilitate the calling of the Gentiles to the faith.

Thirdly, he declares expreſsly, as St. *Paul* obſerves, that he was to call his people, that which was not his people, that he might by that means provoke the people of *Iſrael* to jealouſy. This notion of jealouſy, mentioned by St. *Paul*, deſerves to be taken notice of with very great care, if we reflect upon the ſpirit of jealouſy which reigned amongſt the *Iſraelites* and their neighbours.

I ſhall take notice in another place of the great number of oracles of *David* upon the ſame ſubject, although he otherwiſe inſults upon the *Moabites* and *Edomites*, upon all occaſions, and ſhews as much averſion and jealouſy againſt thoſe nations, as was poſſible for one that lived in a continual war with thoſe people.

I ſhall alſo make ſome reflexions upon *Solomon*'s marriage with the princeſſes of *Tyre*, of *Sidon*, and of *Egypt*; that is to ſay, with the poſterity of *Ham*, which was united to that of *Judah*, to take a part with them in the bleſſing; from whence it came to paſs, that the Song that was written upon that marriage, was preſerved as a piece divinely inſpired, and ought to be conſidered as a happy preſage of the calling of the Gentiles to the communion of the Meſſiah.

One may alſo join here the manner of *Solomon*'s giving to *Hiram*'s ſubjects, who had helped him in the building of the temple, the country of *Chabul*, which was encloſed within *Judea*, although thoſe people were of the *Canaanites* poſterity, upon whom *Noah* had particularly pronounced, *Curſed be Canaan* (*e*).

One

(*e*) Gen. ix.

ne may also see, that as God had permitted his people to be transed into *Chaldea* and *Babylon*, and had raised up there Prophets ngst them on purpose to acquaint the world with the glorious hopes he *Jews*, so he caused the books of Scripture to be translated into ek above 300 years before our Saviour's birth, not only to prevent uspicion of falsehood in the minds of the Gentiles, if they were pro-ed of a sudden after the birth of the Messiah, but also to instruct the thens by little and little of the right which all nations had, as well as *Jews*, to that promise; that they might take their share in it, when- they should be invited to it by God; and especially to take away the dal which was to follow upon God's destroying the form of that monwealth by the *Romans*, according to *Daniel*'s prediction.

ll these things, no doubt, engaged the *Jews* who read the books of *es* to make particular remarks upon them.

ut they ought to have observed three things especially: the first was, although God had at first chosen their whole nation, yet he was sed to disperse afterwards almost ten parts of thirteen; which plainly wed that this choice which he had made, was only an economical ice, and for a particular design.

he second is, that although he was very severe and punctual in exact- obedience to the ceremonial service, yet he had fixed the most part heir observances to certain places, to certain times, and to certain ons: it was easy to judge, that when God bounded them in this nner, it was only for an economical service, prescribed only upon a ticular prospect, which was one day to have an end.

he third is, that experience convinced them that although God ned to have fixed his service to the temple, yet he suffered the *Chal-ns* to destroy the first, and did not restore to the second the first marks his presence, when it was rebuilt by the order of *Cyrus*.

rom whence it was natural to conclude, that such a glory as retired little and little from that place which God had chosen, was only de-ed to be there for a time, till God should extend his service, by call- all the world to his religion, and so making the whole universe his ple, as we see it done in our days, by the calling of the Gentiles to religion of our Saviour.

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PREFACE.

IN my Reflexions upon the Book of *Geneſis*, I have ſhewed the means God made uſe of to imprint the ideas of the Creation of the World, and the Promiſe of the Meſſiah, during that long tract of 2500 years, before the children of *Iſrael* departed out of *Egypt*, and before the hiſtory of it was penned by *Moſes*.

They that conſider that God at firſt preſcribed the law of the ſabbath, to fix the belief of the creation of the world, and that this law hath been conſtantly obſerved ſince the beginning of the world until *Moſes*, and is ſtill to this day obſerved amongſt the *Jews*, eaſily apprehend, that this fact of the creation could not be more inconteſtably proved, or more firmly grounded.

In like manner an attentive reflexion upon the Oracles which I have mentioned, and which alone at firſt were the foundation and hope of the religion of the Patriarchs, and were afterwards recorded in the book of *Geneſis*, is ſufficient to perſuade any one that it was impoſſible but the memory of the Promiſe of the Meſſiah ſhould be deeply engraved in the minds of the *Iſraelites*, though we ſhould ſuppoſe that the ſpirit of jealouſy which God had raiſed amongſt the ſeveral pretenders to the execution of that great Promiſe, did not much contribute to preſerve the remembrance of it; as I have ſhewn very carefully, that it was very uſeful for that purpoſe.

I have in my Reflexions afterwards proved, upon the four laſt Books of *Moſes*, that God proſecuted the ſame deſign in the laws which he gave to the people of *Iſrael*, as well as in the peculiar forms and regulations of their government and religion; the great deſign of which rules, was only that the Meſſiah, at his appearance in the world, might be unqueſtionably known.

Whoever ſhall read the Reflexions which I have made upon this matter, will eaſily perceive, that the long life of the Patriarchs was of great efficacy, to make ſo freſh and lively an impreſſion of thoſe illuſtrious facts, the Creation of the World, and the Promiſe of the Meſſiah, that there was no need of very frequent Oracles to confirm the ſame; as indeed we find that, in the ſpace of 2553 years, only five or ſix principal Oracles were given, which have a particular relation to the Meſſiah, as I ſhall ſhew afterwards.

ow this reflexion being once ſuppoſed, as the life of man was after-
s conſiderably ſhortened at the time of *Moſes*, ſo one may judge that
promiſe ought to be more frequently propoſed, and more clearly ex-
ed. And we ought to ſuppoſe that in proportion to the delaying of
Promiſe, and the ſhortneſs of men's lives, which diſcouraged their
s of ever ſeeing a Promiſe fulfilled, which their anceſtors, whoſe
were much longer, could never attain to the more diſtinct know-
e which God gave of this great object, was in order to ſtir up ſtrong
es in the minds of the *Iſraelites*, as well as of the *Gentiles*, to whom
was afterwards to renew the ideas of it: and conſequently we find
a greater number of Oracles and Prophecies were required, from
to time, to entertain and ſtrengthen the belief of a Promiſe, the
mpliſhment whereof was ſo conſiderably deferred.
nd indeed this was exactly the method which God followed, the
t of Prophecy having in a moſt illuſtrious manner been employed to
erve the ideas of the Promiſe of the Meſſiah, and to increaſe them
he minds of the *Jews*, until the time of the accompliſhment itſelf;
God hath ſo exactly ſet down by the Prophets, the ſeveral parts of
deſign, as there needs not be afterwards any difficulty in diſcerning
proſecution of that deſign which he had formed at firſt.
intend, in this third part of my Reflexions on the Writings of the
Teſtament, to explain this method which God hath followed, in
ving how he hath accommodated himſelf to the ſtate of the *Jews*,
om he had made the depoſitaries of his Oracles, and proportioned them
heir underſtanding and deſires.
For the more happy execution of this deſign, and a clearer diſcovery
his conduct of God, which ſeems ſomewhat obſcured, by intermix-
theſe predictions concerning the Meſſiah, with a great number of
nts, during that ſeries of ages whereof we have the hiſtory written
his own order, I think myſelf obliged firſt of all to explain the rea-
s why God was pleaſed to interweave the Oracles which relate to the
ſſiah, with other matters that ſeem to be of a very different nature;
then ſhall lay down the rules which one ought to follow, in applying
ancient Prophecies to the Meſſiah.
After theſe preliminary Reflexions, I ſuppoſe, that in order to a fuller
covery of the ſeries of God's deſign, and a more diſtinct knowledge
the progreſs of the revelation of this matter, that I ought again to
ume, and to ſet before the eyes of the reader, the five or ſix principal
acles which God hath given concerning the Meſſiah, from the begin-
g of the world to *Moſes*, together with that Oracle which he uttered
the mouth of that illuſtrious legiſlator.
One will eaſily judge, without my undertaking to prove it, that the
as of theſe Oracles were familiar to the *Jews* until *David*, during
ſpace of 400 years; after which, God began to diſcover the ſame more
rticularly, in chooſing *David* to be the perſon in whoſe family that
ophecy ſhould be accompliſhed, becauſe the Meſſiah was to be born of
s ſeed.
And ſo I ſhall immediately paſs on to the conſideration of thoſe Oracles
ch *David* himſelf uttered on this ſubject, which deſerve ſo much the
more

more attention, because God, who at that time changed the government of the *Jews*, did considerably augment the ideas which the ancients had concerning the Promise of the Messiah.

Lastly, I shall collect under certain heads those Oracles which were uttered by the Prophets concerning the Messiah, some hundred of years before the captivity of the *Jews* in *Babylon*, and soon after; and forasmuch as the light concerning this matter was at that time much increased, and the Oracles themselves are much more clear and distinct, as giving many more particular characters of the Messiah, so I shall content myself briefly to touch upon them, in following the principal characters which they give concerning the Messiah.

After which, I shall have nothing else to do, but to make some reflexions upon the state of the *Jews*, from the time of the last of the Prophets, until that wherein the Christians pretend that this Promise and these Oracles were accomplished in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Though the multiplicity of the things which I am to handle, and which I intend to do with the greatest briefness that is possible, might seem to oblige me to omit the examining the succession of the history of the *Jews*, yet God having been pleased to intermix the history of the *Jews*, and many other transactions, with these Prophecies, it obligeth me in this third part to make also some Reflexions upon the Historical Books of the *Old Testament*. And indeed this will be of great use to prove the truth of these Oracles, and the manner how God hath constantly followed that draught which he at first formed to himself; as also to make it appear, that notwithstanding the different revolutions of the *Jewish* commonwealth, he hath always continued those means which he chose at first, to facilitate the distinct knowledge of the Messiah, whenever he should appear.

It is very necessary to explain this series of the design of God, to make the authority of these Prophecies more firm and unmovable; those laws, the observation of which serve to distinguish the family of *Judah*, and that of the Messiah, being so many boundaries and limits, within which God was pleased to confine himself, that his conduct in this matter might be the more easily observable and known.

And forasmuch as, in my Reflexions upon the Books of *Moses*, I have begun by the firm establishment of the truth of those Books on which I made my reflexions, without which that work would have wanted all its strength, so I intend also in this part to follow the same rule; and accordingly I shall at first establish the truth of the Historical and Prophetical Books of the *Old Testament*: for if one ought to prove that these Prophecies were well known and very famous, then it will be expected from me that I should solidly demonstrate the truth of those Books in which those Oracles are recorded, before I can of right conclude that the facts which are related by other authors are the accomplishment of these Prophecies.

This design would naturally engage me to prove the truth of every one of these Books, in order, particularly: but as I have not only proved the truth of the Books of *Moses* already, but that moreover I intend, in my Reflexions on the Books of the *New Testament*, to demonstrate the truth,

of them beyond all conteſt; and beſides, that the Hiſtorical and
etical Books of the *Old Teſtament* are ſo eſſentially linked with
of *Moſes*, and the Diſciples of Jeſus Chriſt, that it is impoſſible to
wledge the truth of the one, without owning at the ſame time the
of the others; I believe I may be diſpenſed with, as to the proving
uth of every Book of the *Old Teſtament* in particular; and there-
becauſe I intend to be very ſhort, I will confine myſelf to ſome
al Reflexions upon thoſe Books of the *Old Teſtament* which were
ince *Moſes*, but ſuch as, I hope, will be ſufficient to ſatisfy an
ible and intelligent Reader.

REFLEXIONS

REFLEXIONS

UPON THE

HISTORICAL AND PROPHETICAL BOOKS

OF THE

OLD TESTAMENT

TO

ESTABLISH THE TRUTH

OF THE

CHRISTIAN RELIGION

CHAP. I.

That there is, in the Hiſtorical Writings of the OLD TESTAMENT, *uninterrupted Series of Events, which have a natural and neceſſa Dependance for more than Ten Ages.*

THE firſt general proof which I make uſe of to eſtabliſh the trut of the Hiſtorical Books of the Old Teſtament after *Moſes*, ma be lawfully drawn from the uninterrupted ſeries of events which a related by thoſe authors who have written the Hiſtory of the State an Church of *Iſrael*.

We may obſerve ſeveral conſiderable *epochas* of this hiſtory, whic takes in about one thouſand and forty years.

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The first part takes in all that happened after *Moses* till the establishment of the kingdom, which is related in the books of *Joshua*, *Judges*, *Ruth*, and the first book of *Samuel*.

The second contains the history of the kings of *Judah* and *Israel*, till the destruction of *Samaria* and *Jerusalem*.

The third contains an account of what passed during the *Jewish* captivity, and after their re-establishment.

Now, there is not one of these books which concern the history of this people, in one or other of these *epochas*, which has not certain characters of the truth of its relations, by the necessary connexion which it has, either with those events which went before it, or with those which followed it, and this by a natural and immediate dependance. This ought to be confirmed by some observations.

The book of *Joshua*, which contains the conquest and division of the land of *Canaan*, is the execution of *Moses*'s design, who brought the people of *Israel* out of *Egypt*, to go and make themselves masters of a country which the *Jews* pretend that God promised to *Abraham*. The division of this land amongst the tribes, is the title which each tribe had to its possessions in it; and this division subsisted a great while very distinct, and well known by the several tribes of this people. There happened no considerable change, but only when the kings of *Assyria* carried the ten tribes into captivity, after the taking of *Samaria*, in the three thousand two hundred and eighty-third year of the world; the country continuing in the same state, under the two remaining tribes, without any change ensuing upon their transportation into *Babylon*, as I have observed in the nineteenth chapter of my Reflexions upon *Exodus*, and the following books.

This book has a very natural influence upon the following books, as is manifest from the history of the alliance which the *Gibeonites* got from the *Jews* by surprise. It serves for a foundation to all that happened for four hundred and thirty years after, in *David*'s reign, under whom the commonwealth, being already changed into a monarchical government, is in all appearance undergone a great alteration.

The book of *Judges* has an essential relation to the books of *Moses* and *Joshua*, the most part of the captivities of the people of *Israel* being a consequence of their quarrels with the nations which they had subdued, or with their neighbours, as the *Moabites* and *Ammonites* descended from *Lot*, who were jealous of this people that was descended from *Abraham*. There we may see, for instance, the *Israelites* upon the defensive part, because God forbad them to set upon the *Moabites* and the *Ammonites*; whereas these last pretended that *Israel* had usurped some part of their country.

It must be granted, that there is nothing so remarkable as the actions of these judges, whom God raised up to deliver his people from those different captivities through which they passed for three hundred and forty-six years together. But we may find the memory of some of them preserved by those public hymns which were famous throughout the nation, and by those illustrious monuments of their judicial authority which were preserved amongst them, and which kept up a remembrance of them amongst the *Israelites* and the neighbouring nations.

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For this ought to be obſerved with care, that ſince the *Jews* co not invent any thing upon this head, which would not be well kno by all the neighbouring nations, as the *Tyrians*, who kept up their o government till *Alexander*'s time, who ſubdued them entirely, and *Moabites*, whoſe empire continued for fourteen ages after *Lot*'s ti until the deſtruction of *Jeruſalem* by *Nebuchadnezzar*, it was not e for any fabulous relations in this matter to obtain authority.

The book of *Ruth* ſeems not to have any thing conſiderable, but converſion of *Ruth*, a *Moabiteſs*, who relied upon the hopes of the ho of *Judah*, out of which ſhe had married her huſband. But we may t notice of three things beſides: 1. Of the exact practice of that law wh obliged them to marry the widow of a relation who died without iſſ 2. Of their lively remembrance of the deeds of their anceſtors, as *Judah*'s inceſt with *Thamar*, which was looked upon however as a fo tain and a pattern of bleſſings; 3. Of the lineage of *David*, wh this author repreſents as deriving his pedigree from a *Moabiteſs*, wh not making much for the honour of a king of *Iſrael*, does at the ſa time confirm the truth of the relations which are contained in t book.

The firſt book of *Samuel* contains the hiſtory of *Eli*'s and *Samu* judicatures, of the change of the government from a commonwealth a monarchy under *Saul*, of *David*'s anointing, *Saul*'s rejection death.

The ſecond contains the hiſtory of *David*, his victories, his deſign building a temple, a deſign which God left to *Solomon* to execute, wars with the *Ammonites*, his crime with *Bathſheba*, his ſon *Abſalo* inſurrection againſt him, and his great ſucceſſes againſt his enemi There is nothing in theſe two books, which has not an exact connex with what went before, and what follows. One ſees throughout, exact relation to the law of *Moſes*; one ſees throughout, monume ſet up in ſeveral places, to preſerve the memory of particular actio one ſees alſo, in the wars of the *Iſraelites* with their neighbours, a c ſtant ſeries of thoſe old differences which were the fruits of the jealo of theſe nations againſt the children of *Iſrael*.

The books of the *Kings*, which the *Jews* reckoned but as one bo contain an abridgement of *Solomon*'s eſtabliſhment in the place of *Da* of the glory of his empire, which was carried by *David* to the banks *Euphrates*, according to the ancient prophecies; of his marriage w the king of *Egypt*'s daughter; of the building of the temple, and his o palace, with the help of *Hiram*, king of *Tyre*: one ſees the manner the queen of *Sheba*'s viſit to *Solomon*, of his alliances with the *Moabi* the *Ammonites*, the *Edomites*, the *Zidonians*, and the *Hittites*; think by theſe marriages to have put an end to the old quarrels between people and theſe nations, who were jealous of the people of *Iſrael*. this was done in the forty years of *Solomon*'s reign; and as there ne was ſo famous a reign in *Judea*, ſo never was there any, of which th are left ſo many monuments, as well there, as in the neighbour countries.

One ſees afterwards, in the ſame book, the diviſion of *Solomon*'s e pire into two governments, that of *Judah*, which continued from S

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n's death, during the reign of eighteen ſucceſſors, for three hundred hty-ſix years, to the taking of *Jeruſalem* by *Nebuchadnezzar*; and that *Iſrael* formed by *Jeroboam*, which laſted two hundred fifty-four years, ler the reign of nineteen ſucceſſors, until the taking of *Samaria*, the ital city of the kingdom of *Iſrael*.

The hiſtory of the *Chronicles*, which was written about twenty-ſix rs after that of the *Kings*, carries the hiſtory down to *Cyrus*, the nder of the empire of *Perſia*, who gave the *Jews* their liberty again. ie books of *Ezra* and *Nehemiah* contain the hiſtory of what paſſed der his ſucceſſors, to the time of *Artaxerxes*, for almoſt eighty-two rs.

It was in this interval that the deliverance happened which the *Jews* eived under *Eſther*, wife to one of the moſt powerful kings of *Perſia*, memory of which the *Jews* celebrate every year in all places, the rteenth and fourteenth days of the month *Adar*, (which anſwers to *February*) by virtue of *Eſther*'s law.

After theſe general remarks, with which I ſhall content myſelf at pre- t, I ought to make ſome reflexions, which cannot be omitted with- taking away a great deal of force from thoſe proofs which eſtabliſh truth of this matter.

The firſt is, that as theſe hiſtories have a neceſſary relation to the rs of *Moſes*. ſo they could not have been neglected by a people who, their religious and civil conduct, were abſolutely regulated by thoſe y laws.

The ſecond is, that all the actions related in this hiſtory, have paſſed ogether in the boſom of a people, the extent of whoſe country is not enty leagues in breadth, nor eighty in length.

The third is, that this people having obſerved the law of the ſeventh r, and of the firſt year, or year of jubilee, (which law you have in twenty-fifth of *Leviticus*) from their firſt conqueſt and diviſion of the ntry, forty-ſeven years after their coming out of *Egypt*, this obſer- ion has ſerved for a double cycle, to fix the remembrance of thoſe ions, and to make it paſs from one generation to another. And ſo greatneſs of that promiſe which God made to *Hezekiah*, (*Eſai.* xvii. 30. and II. *Kings* xix. 29.) may eaſily be underſtood; that al- ugh *Sennacherib*'s invaſion would, in all probability, lay waſte all *dea*, yet they might eat the fruits of the earth in quietneſs, the four- nth year of *Hezekiah*, and the next year they ſhould eat the fruits that uld grow up of themſelves without tillage, and that on the ſixteenth r they ſhould have liberty to till the ground, as formerly; which ws, without any force upon the words, that the fifteenth year of *zekiah*'s reign was the ſabbathical year, in which the *Jews* were for- den to cultivate the ground.

The fourth is, that it appears in effect, by the ſeries of this whole y, that things were written ſo as to agree with the public records ich were extant amongſt the people: this is manifeſt, if we conſider v often the ſacred penmen refer us to the hiſtories and annals of thoſe gs of whom they ſpeak, and of whom they only quote the principal ies, in ſhort, in purſuing their deſign, which was entirely to bring an

account of the ſtate of the religion and the government of the *Jews* and *Iſraelites*, under one view.

Let us go on to other proofs to eſtabliſh this truth.

CHAP. II.

That there is a ſtrict Connexion between the Sacred Hiſtory, and the oldeſt Monuments which we have of Profane Hiſtory.

AS there were but few very ancient writers of Profane Hiſtory, and as we have but ſmall fragments of them diſperſed here and there, preſerved for the moſt part by the care of *Joſephus* the *Jewiſh* hiſtorian, and of *Euſebius* in his books *De Præparatione Evangelicâ*, ſo we ought not to be ſurpriſed, if but few of the more illuſtrious paſſages and events of the *Jewiſh* hiſtory be taken notice of by Pagan writers. The people of *Iſrael* being otherwiſe engaged, by the obſervation of the *Moſaic* law, to keep cloſe to that country where it was eſtabliſhed; this made their neighbours have leſs knowledge of their hiſtory.

However, there is enough left to ſhew with how great fidelity and exactneſs the ſacred writers penned the hiſtory of their own nation: in ſhort, we may find amongſt the Heathen hiſtorians and poets (who were their firſt hiſtorians), ſeveral relations which ſhew that the matters of fact related by the ſacred writers, were well enough known to them, and in the ſame manner that they are related in thoſe hiſtorical books which were written after *Moſes*.

The memory of *Joſhua* and his conqueſts was famous amongſt the Heathens: there are ancient monuments extant which prove that the *Carthaginians* were a colony of the *Tyrians*, who eſcaped from *Joſhua*; as alſo that the inhabitants of *Leptis* in *Africa* came originally from the *Zidonians*, who forſook their country, becauſe of the miſeries which afflicted it.

The fable of the *Phœnician Hercules* aroſe from the hiſtory of *Joſhua* (*f*); the overthrow of the giants, and the famous *Typhon*, owe their original to the overthrow of *Og* the king of *Baſhan*, and of the *Anakims*, who were called giants (*g*).

The tempeſt of hail ſpoken of in the eleventh of *Joſhua*, was tranſformed by the poets into a tempeſt of ſtones, with which, as they ſay, *Jupiter* overwhelmed the enemies of *Hercules* in *Arim*, which is exactly the country where *Joſhua* fought with the children of *Anak*.

One finds the memorial of the actions of *Gideon* preſerved by *Sanchoniathon*, a *Tyrian* writer, who lived ſoon after him, and whoſe antiquity is atteſted by *Porphyry*.

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(*f*) *Procop. Vandalicorum*, lib. ii. c. 10.
(*g*) *Polybius, Frag.* cxiv. *Salluſt. de Bello Jugurthino.*

One finds, in the manner of *Jephtha*'s ſacrificing his daughter after his victory over the *Ammonites*, the original of the ſacrificing of *Iphigenia*; it being uſual with the Heathens, as *Ælian* judiciouſly obſerves (*h*), to attribute to their later heroes the glory of the actions of thoſe who lived long before.

We have an account of a feaſt which was obſerved by the Heathen *Romans* in *April*, the time of the *Jewiſh* harveſt, in which they let looſe foxes with torches faſtened to their tails, which certainly came from the ſtory of *Sampſon*, and was brought into *Italy* by the *Phœnicians* (*i*).

One finds, in the ſame hiſtory of *Sampſon* and *Delilah*, the original of the ſtory of *Niſus* and his daughter, who cut off thoſe fatal hairs upon which the victory depended (*k*).

Nicolaus Damaſcenus has preſerved the account of the victory which *David* obtained over the *Syrians* of *Zoba*, upon the banks of the *Euphrates*, as it is deſcribed by the ſacred writers (*l*).

There are monuments extant which deſcribe the part which *Hiram* king of *Tyre* had in the building of the temple of *Solomon*, almoſt the ſame with the account which the ſacred authors give us of his part in the erection of that great work.

One finds in *Herodotus* an account of the taking of *Jeruſalem* by *Seſoſtris*, king of *Egypt*, as it is deſcribed in the hiſtory of *Rehoboam* (*m*).

One finds the hiſtory of the kings of *Syria* related by *Nicolaus Damaſcenus* in the ſame manner as it is deſcribed by the ſacred writers, when they give us an account of the victories which the kings of *Syria* obtained over the kings of *Samaria*.

One finds that the ſtory of *Phaëton* is ſolely founded upon the tranſlation of *Elijah* in a chariot of fire (*n*).

All that I have taken notice of, happened before the time of the firſt *Olympiad*, from whence the learned *Varro* has obſerved that the firſt knowledge of hiſtory began amongſt the *Greeks*; whence alſo it is that they call all the precedent time fabulous, the *Greeks* having before nothing but fables, into which they had turned whatever ancient hiſtory they were acquainted with.

Since that time, we do not find fewer marks of the truth of the ſacred hiſtories.

One ſees in the Pagan writers the reign of *Tiglah-Pileſer*, who is the ſame with the younger *Ninus*; as alſo the deſtruction of the *Syrian* monarchy by his means, as it is deſcribed to us in the ſacred hiſtorians. *Nicholas Damaſcenus* in *Joſephus*, *Antiq. lib.* vii. *cap.* 6.

One ſees amongſt the Heathens, the ſucceſſion of *Shalmaneſer* as it is deſcribed in the Scriptures (*o*).

One ſees the manner of *Sennacherib*'s conquering the moſt part of the towns

(*h*) *Variæ Hiſtoriæ*, lib. v. cap. 3.
(*i*) *Ovid. Faſtorum* lib. iv.
(*k*) *Ovid. Metam.* lib. viii. fab. i.
(*l*) *Joſeph. Antiq.* lib. vii. cap. 6.
(*m*) *Joſeph. Antiq.* lib. vii. cap. 6.
(*n*) II. Kings ii.
(*o*) *Caſtor in Euſeb.*

towns of *Paleſtina*, of *Tyre* and *Sidon*, deſcribed in Heathen writers, particularly as we have it in the Scriptures (*p*).

The manner of *Sennacherib*'s ſucceſſion to *Shalmaneſer*, of his deſolating the country of *Paleſtine* while he carried on his victories, is deſcribed by the Heathens, *Herodot. lib.* ii. & *Beroſus in Joſephus, lib.* x. *c.* 1. exactly as the ſacred hiſtorians relate it.

The memory of *Tirhakah* king of *Æthiopia*, as of a great conqueror, is preſerved amongſt the Heathens (*q*); for it was his coming, in ſhort, which obliged *Sennacherib* to ariſe from before *Libna*, whence he intended to go and beſiege *Jeruſalem*.

One finds amongſt the Heathens the remembrance of the manner of the deſtruction of all *Sennacherib*'s army, for his blaſphemies againſt God, which the *Egyptians* diſguiſed, to appropriate to themſelves. *Herodot. lib.* ii. *cap.* 141.

One finds the ruin of *Aſhdod* by king *Pſammetichus* deſcribed by Heathen authors, as we have it in the ſacred Scriptures. *Herod. lib.* ii. (*r*).

One finds an account of the ways by which the *Medes* loſt the *empire* of *Aſia* under *Cyaxares*, after his conqueſts over the *Aſſyrians*, in the Heathen writers, much the ſame as it is deſcribed in *Nahum.* ii. 5.

The account of the taking of *Ninive* by *Nabopolaſſar*, and by *Aſtyages*, is much the ſame in Heathen authors (*s*) with the deſcription of it in *Nahum*, *Eſaiah*, and *Ezekiel*.

The manner of *Joſiah*'s undertaking a war againſt *Pharaoh-Necho*, king of *Egypt*, when he was overthrown in the plains of *Megiddo*, as it is deſcribed by the Heathens (*t*), agrees with the relation which is given of it in the holy Scriptures.

The victories of *Nebuchadnezzar* over the *Egyptians* and the *Jews*, the carrying away of the conſecrated veſſels of the temple, and of the *Jews* to *Babylon* (*u*), are deſcribed by the Heathens.

The manner of the yielding up of *Tyre* to *Nebuchadnezzar*, as they deſcribe it (*x*), agrees with what *Ezekiel* ſays, chap. xxviii. 18. 19.

One finds in Heathen authors an account of the ſtately buildings of *Babylon* by *Nebuchadnezzar* (*y*), which is deſcribed exactly in the Scriptures.

One finds alſo in them (*z*), that the death of *Pharaoh-Hophra* or *Vaphres*, as they call him, happened according to *Jeremiah*'s predictions, chap. xl. 30.

One finds alſo the taking of *Babylon*, by *Cyrus* (*a*), as it is deſcribed by the Prophet *Jeremiah*, chap. li. 46.

One finds alſo that the death of *Belſhazzar* (*b*) happened exactly as *Daniel* deſcribed it, chap. v.

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(*p*) *Menander* apud *Joſeph.* lib. ix. cap. ult.
(*q*) *Strabo*, lib. i. & xv.
(*r*) *Herodot.* lib. i. cap. 104. lib. ii. cap. 1. lib. vii. cap. 10.
(*s*) *Alexand. Polyhiſtor.* ap. *Syncellum.*
(*t*) *Herodot.* lib. ii. (*u*) II. Kings xxiii. 29, 30.
(*x*) *Annal. Phœnic.* ap. *Joſeph.* lib. i. contra *Apionem.*
(*y*) *Beroſ. Abyden.* (*z*) *Herodot.* lib. ii. cap. 163. & 169.
(*a*) *Herodot.* lib. i. cap. 178. (*b*) *Xenophon. Hiſtor.* lib. vii.

One ſees there an account of *Xerxes*'s great undertaking againſt *Greece* (*c*), as *Daniel* had foretold it, chap. xi.

Here then is an agreement which is perfect enough in ſeveral articles, to which we might add a greater number, if we had a greater number of Pagan hiſtorians: but as we cannot find, after the reign of *Artaxerxes Longimanus*, hiſtories amongſt the *Jews* of equal authority with thoſe which were written by and after *Moſes*, as *Joſephus* the *Jewiſh* hiſtorian obſerves, ſo we cannot compare the *Jewiſh* and Pagan hiſtories together afterwards, in that form we have done hitherto.

But it is eaſy to obſerve four things, which are very conſiderable, upon this head.

I. That the credit of the ſacred hiſtorians may be grounded upon the great number of remarks we have made already, or elſe nothing will ever eſtabliſh it. For how can we conceive that all ſorts of hiſtorians, of all nations and all ages, *Babylonians*, *Aſſyrians*, *Tyrians*, *Egyptians*, and *Greeks*, could agree ſo exactly with the *Jews*, in thoſe facts they relate, if the *Jewiſh* authors had not exactly followed the rules of truth?

II. That as the prophecies of *Zechariah* and *Daniel* deſcribe, with an almoſt incredible exactneſs, the conſiderable events which happened in the countries near to *Judea*, and in *Judea* itſelf, in a time which was not expired until the ſacred writers had given over writing amongſt the *Jews*, ſo there was need of almoſt nothing elſe, but to look over the books of *Daniel*, to ſee what happened from day to day. And here we may obſerve, that the reaſon why *Porphyry* thought the book of *Daniel* was forged after the time of *Antiochus Epiphanes*, was, becauſe this book ſeemed to him to be rather a hiſtory than a prediction; which he juſtified, in making a ſort of commentary upon this prophecy, by comparing with it the Pagan hiſtorians which were then extant.

III. That as the *Jewiſh* commonwealth came under the power of the *Greeks*, who were maſters of learning, and of the art of writing hiſtories, ſo there is little need of any other witneſſes beſide the *Greek* authors, as *Joſephus* demonſtrates, in effect, by proving that the *Greeks* were well enough acquainted with the affairs of the *Jewiſh* nation.

IV. That we do really find, after the time of *Artaxerxes*, a very great part of the *Jewiſh* hiſtory compoſed by the care of ſome particular men, with ſufficient exactneſs, though it be not of equal authority with the ſacred writers.

CHAP. III.

That there is an uninterrupted Series of Events foretold by the ſacred Oracles, of which we may ſee a very great Number accompliſhed in every Age.

AS we may very reaſonably ſay, that all the hiſtory of the people of *Iſrael* has a very exact dependance upon the writings of that famous legiſlator; ſo we may alſo obſerve, that there are ſcarce any conſiderable

(*c*) *Herod.* lib. vii. cap. 5, 6.

ſiderable events which make up the body of this hiſtory, which do not deſerve a particular remark, either as a fulfilling of *Moſes*'s prophecies, or of thoſe other Prophets whom God raiſed up after him to reform the errors of that nation. And it is a very conſiderable thing, that in all the ſeries of events foretold by the Prophets, there was not one generation amongſt all the offspring of the people, but what ſaw the accompliſhment of ſeveral of thoſe oracles. A little attention and care in comparing the chronology of the oracles with that of the events, will ſufficiently juſtify what I ſay. I ſhall content myſelf with obſerving their different orders, which will ſatisfy a judicious reader, ſince my deſign does not engage me neceſſarily to do a thing which would carry me too far, and which may be done with little application.

We may conſider four ſorts of oracles: 1. thoſe which have reſpect to particular facts nigh at hand; 2. thoſe which have reſpect to particular facts, but at a greater diſtance; 3. thoſe which have reſpect to facts which belong to the whole *Jewiſh* nation; 4. thoſe which have reſpect to facts which belong to foreign nations, either bordering upon *Paleſtina*, or further from it. Now there is nothing ſo exactly fulfilled, as thoſe four ſorts of oracles.

You have, for particular facts, which were nigh at hand, and foretold by the Prophets, the oracle of *Moſes* concerning the advancement of *Joſhua*, and the conqueſt of *Paleſtine*, which happened ſoon after.

You have *Deborah*'s oracle of the victory promiſed to *Barak*.

You have *Samuel*'s oracle of the advancement and rejection of *Saul*.

You have an oracle of the ſame *Samuel*, of the advancement of *David*.

You have *Nathan*'s oracle concerning *Abſalom*'s revolt.

You have *Ahijah*'s oracle concerning the advancement of *Jeroboam*, and the diviſion of *Solomon*'s kingdom into ten tribes, and into two tribes, whereof the leſſer part was to continue in the poſſeſſion of *Solomon*'s heirs.

You have *Ahijah*'s prediction of the death of *Jeroboam*'s ſon.

You have a prediction of the advancement of *Jehu* in the place of *Jehoram* king of *Iſrael*.

You have *Elijah*'s prediction of the exemplary puniſhment of *Ahab* and *Jezabel*.

You have the prediction of *Jehoiakim*'s death made by *Jeremiah*, chap. xxii. 18, 19. and chap. xxxvi. 30. which happened ten years after.

You have the prediction of *Jechoniah*'s miſeries made by *Jeremiah*, chap. xxii. 8.

You have *Jeremiah*'s prediction of the death of the falſe Prophet *Ananiah*, but ſeven months before it happened.

You have an expreſs deſignation of *Zorobabel* to conclude the rebuilding of the temple, made by *Zechariah*, chap. iv. 9. and which was comp eted in four years.

It is therefore fully evident, that the prediction of particular facts, which were to happen in a very ſhort time, ſerved to eſtabliſh the authority of the Prophets. And in effect one ſees that they proceeded upon

upon the authority which thoſe predictions of nearer events gave them, to foretell other particular events at a greater diſtance.

So you ſee that *Moſes* foretold after a ſort, after *Jacob*, the manner how the land of *Canaan* was to be divided, though the thing was to be done by lot.

You ſee the ſame *Moſes* foretelling the ſeveral captivities which the people of *Iſrael* ſuffered after the conqueſt, and the method of God's raiſing up ſeveral judges, to the number of fourteen, to bring them out of thoſe calamities.

You ſee the ſame *Moſes* foretelling that the temple ſhould be built in the tribe of *Benjamin*, though it was the leaſt.

You have *Joſhua*'s prediction of the way how the rebuilder of *Jericho* ſhould be exemplarily puniſhed; which was accompliſhed in *Ahab*'s time, (I. *Kings* xvi. 34.) about 570 years after this prophetical imprecation of *Joſhua*.

You have the prediction of a Prophet, who was contemporary to *Jeroboam*, about the birth of *Joſiah*, which was not till 350 years after, (I. *Kings* xiii.) and of the manner of his deſtroying the altar which *Jeroboam* built.

One ſees a prediction of the overthrow of the kingdom of *Samaria*, within 65 years, by *Iſaiah*, in the reign of *Jotham*.

One ſees the deſtruction of *Jeruſalem* by *Nebuchadnezzar*, foretold by ſeveral of the Prophets.

One ſees the taking of *Tyre* by *Nebuchadnezzar*, foretold by *Iſaiah*, chap. xxiii. 15, 17.

One ſees the promiſe of its re-eſtabliſhment, ſeventy years after its deſtruction.

One ſees the promiſe of *Cyrus*'s birth made by *Iſaiah*, chap. xliv. 45. as of one that ſhould reſtore liberty to the *Jews*, and give them opportunities of rebuilding their temple at *Jeruſalem*.

One ſees the prediction of the manner how *Antiochus Epiphanes* would treat the *Jews* in his life time, and how he ſhould be puniſhed for his cruelties and ſacrileges.

One ſees the prediction of the courage of the *Maccabees*, who ſhould oppoſe the tyranny of that prince, and purify anew the Divine worſhip.

So that it is plain, that the foretelling of theſe particular facts, which were at ſo great a diſtance, revived the memory of theſe Prophets amongſt the *Jews* in every age, and made them read them with a ſingular attention.

One ought alſo to make the ſame reflexion upon thoſe oracles which have reſpect to the particular events of the ſtate of the *Jews*, and its continuance until the time of the Meſſiah, after which the Prophets foretel its ruin and deſtruction without remedy.

In ſhort, one may ſay, that there was no revolution, never ſo little conſiderable, of which we do not find very many and very particular predictions foretold by ſeveral Prophets, upon very different occaſions, and particular circumſtances.

One ſees in the books of *Moſes* exact deſcriptions of the pilgrimages of *Abraham*'s poſterity, of their continuance in *Egypt*, of the oppreſſion they were there to undergo, of their prodigious increaſe, of their rob-

bing the *Egyptians* at their departure, of their methods in conquering the land of *Canaan*, of the way how kings ſhould ariſe from *Abraham*; which was accompliſhed in the *Iſhmaelites* and *Edomites*, and at laſt in the *Iſraelites*.

One ſees expreſs predictions of the ſeveral judges whom God ſhould raiſe up to the people of *Iſrael*.

One ſees an expreſs prediction of the advancement of the tribe of *Judah* to the kingdom.

One ſees a prediction of the future ſubjection of the *Edomites* to the power of the kings of *Judah*, and of their conquering of the countries which lie along the banks of *Euphrates*, which was fulfilled in *David*'s time.

One ſees an expreſs diviſion of that kingdom into two very unequal parts.

One ſees great numbers of predictions concerning the ſtate of the kings of *Judah* and *Iſrael*: for inſtance, you have an oracle concerning the deſtruction of *Jehu*'s family in the fourth generation (*d*).

The deſtruction of the kingdom of the ten tribes is expreſsly foretold, and the term is very exactly ſet down.

The ruin of *Jeruſalem*, and of his kings, is alſo expreſsly foretold.

The time of the captivity of the *Jews* in *Babylon*, and

Their re-eſtabliſhment by *Cyrus* after ſeventy years, are alſo very diſtinctly foretold.

The deſolation of *Judea* under the empire of *Alexander*'s ſucceſſors, is foretold very exactly.

Their re-eſtabliſhment after theſe deſolations, and the way by which they were to be defended by the *Maccabees*, who ſhould become their kings, is likewiſe foretold.

In ſhort, one ſees expreſs predictions of the ruin of *Jeruſalem*, and of the whole nation under the *Roman* empire, after the coming of the Meſſiah.

As the people of *Iſrael* had always great quarels with the neighbouring nations, ſo one finds that amongſt the oracles which particularly regard the ſtate of the *Jews*, the Prophets have interwoven a great number which concern thoſe ſtrange people, with relation to thoſe differences which were kept up between the people of *Iſrael* and them.

So one ſees the *Egyptians* and the *Canaanites* puniſhed, in the execution of the oracles pronounced againſt the deſcendants of *Cham*.

One ſees the prediction of the ruin of *Benhadad*, king of *Syria*, and of his houſe, foretold to the tenth generation.

One ſees the prediction of the ruin of *Egypt* and *Tyre*, which happened under *Nebuchadnezzar*.

One ſees the prediction of the ruin of the *Moabites*, which was under the ſame *Nebuchadnezzar*, after that kingdom had ſubſiſted almoſt fourteen ages from its firſt foundation.

One ſees frequent oracles concerning the ruin of *Nineveh*, and its empire.

One ſees oracles concerning the ruin of *Babylon*, which happened under *Cyrus*.

One

(*d*) II. Kings x. 30.

One ſees oracles of the deſtruction of the *Perſian* empire by *Alexander*.

One ſees oracles concerning the manner of this prince's conquering he greateſt part of the world, and of his leaving his empire divided into our kingdoms.

One ſees frequent oracles concerning the ſtate of the empire of the *Seleucidæ*, and the *Ptolemees*, who had particular quarrels with the *Jewiſh* commonwealth.

One ſees the alliances which were to be between the two kingdoms foretold, and the ſmall ſucceſs which ſhould ariſe thence in terminating heir differences.

One ſees predictions of the treatment which the *Jews* ſhould meet with in thoſe kingdoms.

One ſees a prediction of the retreat which *Egypt* was to give to the *Jews*, and of the temple they were to build there.

One ſees an exact prediction of the manner of the profanation of the emple by *Antiochus Epiphanes*, for three years together.

One ſees the prediction of the ruin of theſe two governments by the rms of the *Roman* empire.

It is very natural to make ſome reflexions upon ſuch a various multitude of oracles.

I. That there are no books in the world which are formed like thoſe which we find in the hands of the *Jews*.

One finds there a hiſtory exactly purſued, and in a natural dependance, from the beginning of the world, for 3500 years.

One finds there a ſeries of oracles which foretell all ſorts of events, ſo nſeparably united with the hiſtory; that it is impoſſible to find by what neans the prophecies could have been ſo brought to ſupport the hiſtory, nd the hiſtory to ſupport the authority of the prophecies.

One finds oracles ſo clear, and ſo particular, eſpecially in the book of *Daniel*, that *Porphyry*, a mortal enemy to the Chriſtians, was forced to aſſert, that the book of *Daniel* was forged after *Antiochus Epiphanes*'s time: a ridiculous imagination! for this prophecy was tranſlated into *Greek* more than one hundred years before, and was in the hands, not only of he *Jews*, but of the *Egyptians* alſo, mortal enemies to the whole *Jewiſh* nation.

This alſo is very ſurpriſing, that ſince the *Jews*, after their diſperſion, preſerve theſe hiſtories, wherever they are, as the accompliſhments of he oracles, and theſe oracles as predictions of thoſe events of which heir hiſtory is very full, they ſhould never think of propoſing to us any books of a like nature, conſidering that now, for one and twenty ages, hey have had no parallel authors, who have both writ hiſtory, and pronounced oracles.

II. But, as theſe reflexions lead us on to others, ſo we ought to enter upon them, by conſidering what the moſt unreaſonable obſtinacy can oppoſe to the authority of the Hiſtorical and Prophetical Books of Scripture.

CHAP. IV.

CHAP. IV.

That how common soever Oracles may have been amongst the Pagans, yet nothing amongst them can justly be compared with those which are found amongst the Jews.

ONE of the greatest objections which can in all probability be made against this surprising series of Oracles, which are found in the books of the Old Testament, is taken from that great number of Oracles which are found amongst the Pagans. This objection deserves to be considered, because it will more clearly demonstrate the authority of the Prophetical books which are in the hands of the *Jews*.

I confess there have been false prophets: and indeed, since God has given us marks to distinguish them from true ones, which may be seen in the books of *Moses*, it cannot be denied but there have been some false prophets; and that, moreover, the history of the Prophets discovering to us impostors frequently, we may freely acknowledge, that amongst the Pagans, and the people bordering upon *Judea*, there have been men who have boasted of predictions of things to come, as well as amongst the *Jews*.

I confess also, that some Heathen writers speak of certain oracles, which in all appearance are very well circumstantiated, and of which they relate a very exact accomplishment.

But several things ought to be observed upon this argument, which deserve an attentive consideration.

I. We see that their most celebrated things have been only an imitation of what was done amongst the *Jews*. The *Egyptians* imitated the *Urim* and the *Thummim* of the *Jewish* high priest; and they appropriated to him the right of giving oracles: and so we see they are given by a voice from heaven, which the *Jews* saw was granted to their Prophets. We may see it in the history of *Socrates*'s life, and in *Apuleius*, p. 339.

II. We see that the same Pagan historians take notice that very many, even the greatest part of their oracles, were very ambiguous and false. The philosophers, and *Tully* particularly, openly laughed at them (*Lib.* I. II. *de Divinatione*). They thought it a ridiculous thing, that *Apollo Delphicus*, the god of poetry, should give his answers in very bad verse, and at last be reduced to prose. *Eusebius* quotes a discourse of *Oenomaus*, a *Greek* philosopher, who wrote against oracles, to decry them as impostures.

III. We see that those oracles which had acquired the greatest reputation by their accomplishment, were borrowed from the Prophets of the synagogues. We have an illustrious example in the birth of *Cyrus*, which the Prophet *Isaiah* had foretold, about the year of the world 3292, and concerning which they pretend to shew prophecies of *Nebuchadnezzar* and *Crœsus*, about the year 3492 (*e*); which shews, that if the thing was

(*e*) *Abydenus*. *Herodot.* lib. i. cap. 55. & 91.

as really known to them, they could not have known it but by the ophetical writings which were amongſt the *Jews*, and which could ot have been concealed from them, becauſe the *Jews* read them with re, to comfort themſelves under that captivity to which they were duced by *Nebuchadnezzar*.

IV. It is in effect proved by examining their oracles, moſt of which ere either falſe or forged. This *Euſebius* has clearly proved, [*de Præpar. Evangelicâ*, *lib.* ix. *cap.* 5.] The proverb of the *Sibyl*'s or *Delphic* ieſteſs's favouring of *Philip*, is commonly known. It was eaſy for eſe Heathen princes to biaſs their people with ſuch predictions. But hat *Euſebius* ſays (*f*), puts the thing beyond all queſtion; for he exreſsly ſhews, that when the prieſts were put to the rack, they confeſſed ie whole contrivance of thoſe oracles, which they pronounced to abuſe ie credulity of the people.

We ought to obſerve, that we cannot find great numbers of oracles pon the ſame ſubject; whereas one ſees that the Prophets followed (as were) *Moſes*'s model of the ſtate of the commonwealth of the *Jews*, nd that they frequently concur in foretelling the ſame facts from one eneration to another.

VI. We ought to remember that theſe oracles were not kept within ie limits of one ſingle ſtate or nation.

VII. It may be ſaid that they were not publicly known, having been nly propoſed in private places, before a very few, and, in ſhort, that ney were not actually known to the moſt part of the neighbouring peole; whereas one ſees that the *Jewiſh* Prophets gave their oracles in the moſt ſolemn aſſemblies; and when they were committed to writing, they vere known to all thoſe who had any commerce with that nation. So hat *Iſaiah*'s prophecies were queſtionleſs known to *Nebuchadnezzar* and *Cyrus*, who looked upon himſelf as deſigned by God to reſtore their iberty to the *Jews*. We may make the ſame judgment of the book of *Daniel*, which was known to *Alexander* without all queſtion, as one may ollect from the favourable reception the *Jews* found from him.

VIII. We ought to obſerve, that theſe pretended oracles were given, or the moſt part, in favour of thoſe princes who could ſatisfy the greeineſs of the prieſts. Whereas the Prophets among the *Jews* lived in he moſt diſintereſted manner in the world, and uſually pronounced nohing but reproaches and menaces of cruel calamities to thoſe princes vho had the government in their hands. Their miniſtry conſiſted in a courageous oppoſition to the corruptions in their laws and their religion, and in cenſuring their princes and governors with a ſingular inrepidity; and, indeed, we ſee that moſt of them met with the puniſhnent of their boldneſs, and made trial of the moſt cruel tortures.

IX. Laſt of all, we ought to take notice, that as the oracles which re mentioned in Heathen authors, were only of facts of ſmall importance o thoſe people amongſt whom it is ſaid that they were pronounced, ſo ve do not find that they thought themſelves much concerned in their reſervation; whereas one ſees that the *Jewiſh* nation were ſo perſuaded f the truth of thoſe oracles with which they were entruſted, that nothing to this very day could ever oblige them to diſcontinue the read-

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(*f*) *De Præparat. Evangel.* Lib. iv. initio.

ing of them, whatever disputes they may otherwise have with the Christians, who make use of them to establish their pretensions, notwithstanding *all the claims* of the synagogue.

When this is laid down, it would seem as if I might reasonably conclude, that the wonderful variety of oracles which are to be found amongst the *Jews*, cannot be at all weakened by those oracles of which we find so frequent mention in Pagan writers.

But we ought to go further, in explaining two things, which will perfectly clear this matter; one is, that the Historical and Prophetical Books of the Old Testament after *Moses*, can be no forgeries; the other is, that in truth, those Oracles which we find inserted in those books, could not possibly have been forged after their completion.

CHAP. V.

That the Books in which we may find these Oracles, were never forged.

I HAVE observed formerly, that it is absolutely necessary that the authority of those Books in which these Oracles are inserted, be established, before we can build upon the authority of the Oracles. And, indeed, if we cannot clearly shew that these Books were written, and publicly known, before the things happened which are said to be accomplishments of those preceding Oracles, it would be natural to call in question the authority of these Oracles. But it is very easy to satisfy an equitable reader herein, and to establish in general, or severally, the existence of these prophetical writings, before the times in which those facts happened, which we propose as the accomplishment of those prophecies.

I shall make use of two sorts of reflexions to establish my proposition. The first consists in general considerations upon the books themselves: the second has respect to particular facts, which are uncontested, and whence the same truth very naturally results.

I. We ought to observe, that whereas, in *Genesis*, *Moses* makes use of no other *epocha* to fix the time of any event, but the years of the life of some famous Patriarch: as, for instance, he fixes the flood to the 600 year of *Noah*'s age; in *Exodus* and *Numbers* (*g*) he uses the time of their coming out of *Egypt* for his *epocha*; in the books of the following authors, the years from their departure out of *Egypt* were carefully set down till the fourth year of king *Solomon*'s reign, which was 480 years after their departure. This was a character to fix the time of all those who lived after that *epocha*.

II. The building of the temple began a new *epocha* amongst the *Jews*, as appears from II. *Chron.* viii. 1. though they began after that time to reckon by the years of the kings of *Judah* and *Israel*, as appears by the books

(*g*) Exod. xix. Numb. xxxiii. 38.

ks of the firſt Prophets; which is a character ſufficiently certain, diſtinguiſh thoſe who lived after *Solomon*, with the time when they ed.

II. It is plain that the *Babyloniſh* captivity, and afterwards their ſub- ion to the *Perſian* empire, obliged them to fix their events, and to e their prophecies, by the years of the governments of thoſe foreign gs. [See *Daniel*, *Ezekiel*, *Zechariah*, and *Haggai*.] So the author he book of *Maccabees* refers to the years of the *Seleucidæ*. Now, t we may the better perceive the force of this obſervation, we muſt ember three things. 1. That the authors who lived after the carry- away of the *Jews* into *Babylon*, make uſe of ſome *Chaldee* terms, ch are not to be found in the foregoing prophets; for we may ſee he books of *Haggai*, *Zechariah*, and *Malachi*, the ſame ſtyle with *a*, *Nehemiah*, and *Daniel* (*h*). 2. The authors of theſe books give es to the months, which they had not before the captivity. The *vs* only called their months, firſt, and ſecond, &c. and ſo they gave es which were unheard of before (*i*). 3. The authors of theſe pro- cies take particular notice of any newly-inſtituted faſts; thus we ſee t the Prophet *Haggai* mentioned thoſe faſts of which we have nothing he law, but which were inſtituted during the captivity.

We muſt blind ourſelves of purpoſe, to conceive that any impoſtor ld forge books which have ſo exact a relation, and ſuch certain cha- eriſtics, to fix them to the time in which every author lived, and to circumſtances wherein he wrote. We muſt of neceſſity grant, that, re ſuch an impoſtor could bring about ſuch a deſign, he muſt have le himſelf maſter of the whole profane hiſtory, to fix ſo exactly the ory of the *Jewiſh* nation, and of thoſe oracles which have been given ircumſtances which are unintelligible without the help of profane ories of different nations.

come now to facts which cannot be conteſted. It is ſufficient that e facts be acknowledged as true, to eſtabliſh in general the truth of e books whereof we teach.

It cannot be denied, that the *Jews* preſerve theſe oracles to this with great fidelity.

I. It cannot be denied, that they are in the hands of Chriſtians, who erve them, as well as the *Jews*, ſince they have been ſeparated from n; that is, for almoſt ſeventeen ages.

II. It cannot be denied, that theſe prophecies have been exactly read he *Jews*, becauſe of thoſe oracles upon which they believe, to this that the whole happineſs of their nation is founded.

V. It cannot be denied, that the *Jews* have read theſe books exactly, fute the Diſciples of Jeſus Chriſt, who have pretended, from the firſt of their appearing, that Jeſus Chriſt is the Meſſiah marked out by e oracles. In ſhort, whereas the Chriſtians pretend to prove by the mpliſhment of the ancient oracles, that Jeſus Chriſt was the Meſſiah; known that the *Jews* endeavour to this day to wreſt the ſenſe of e oracles, and to ſhew that there are many things which are not lite- rally

) Ezech. xl. 1. Daniel x. Zach. i. Hagg. i.
Talm. Roſch. Haſſanah. c. i.

rally accomplished, and which by consequence cannot be applied to Jesus Christ.

V. It cannot be denied, that most of the controversies of the *Jews* with the Christians, only regard the application of the text of the prophetical authors. The Christians explain them in a mystical sense; the *Jews* maintain that they ought to be explained literally.

VI. It cannot be denied that, about 300 years before the birth of our Saviour, the prophetical boks were translated, and put into the hands of the *Egyptians*, having been carried to, and translated at *Alexandria*, by a public order of the whole nation, for the satisfaction of a king of *Egypt*. The history of that version which put those sacred books into the hands of the *Greeks*, and the *Jews* who dwelt in *Egypt*, is the most famous thing in the world, and which made those books perfectly known.

Here we have now these books in *Hebrew*, and in *Greek*; that is to say, in the primitive language of the *Jews*, and the vulgar language of the empire which *Alexander* founded.

It is known, that from that time the Christians took care to make great numbers of translations into all the vulgar tongues, after the preaching of the gospel; and that they preserved those ancient books as the first elements of their religion.

Now it will be sufficient to acknowledge those truths, to consider,

That those oracles were true which foretold things which happened almost four ages after their prediction. Thus, for instance, the destruction of *Jerusalem*, the overthrow of the *Jewish* state, the calling of the *Gentiles* to the service of the God of *Israel*, the destruction of the *Syrian* and *Egyptian* monarchies, are all contained in the books of *Daniel*, *Haggai*, *Zechariah*, and *Malachi*.

Now there is not more difficulty to conceive that such authors as *Isaiah*, *Amos*, *Joel*, should have foretold the same thing eight or nine hundred years before, than there is to believe that they were foretold by those who lived but little above four ages before they actually came to pass. There is therefore no difficulty in conceiving that these ancient oracles were proposed as we see them, and in those times to which we find them fixed.

But we ought to go further into this matter, and to establish the same thing by the consideration of the things themselves.

I confess that we might have a suspicion of those oracles which are not related upon the faith of a public volume; as, for instance, those of *Elijah*, *Elisha*, and *Uriah* the son of *Shemaiah*, who seem never to have published any thing.

But here we are to observe, 1. That usually the authors who publish the oracles, are not the same with those who tell us of their accomplishment; 2. That the oracles of which we now speak were upon subject perfectly known, and upon very illustrious exigencies. What more illustrious than the destruction of *Ahab*'s family, foretold by *Elijah*? What more extraordinary than the manner of *Jezabel*'s death, foretold by the same prophet?

In short, we ought to take notice, I. That these oracles were written for the most part in complete volumes: we have sixteen prophets sufficiently distinguished by their proper volumes.

II. Each

II. Each of theſe authors has a very different character from the reſt; that ſome, as *Daniel*, for inſtance, write in a peculiar language, one rt of his book being in *Chaldee*.

III. Every one has ſome relation to the reſt; ſo thoſe who lived together often treat of the ſame things: ſo *Iſaiah*, for inſtance, *Joel*, *Amos*, *oſea*. But they had ſeparate ideas, and particular oracles, and a turn hich perfectly diſtinguiſhes them one from another.

IV. One needs only read their works, to find that they wrote in different places. *Amos* was of *Judah*, and went to propheſy in *Iſrael*; that ppears plainly. *Ezekiel* and *Daniel* propheſied in *Chaldea*; that is ſeen reading their works.

V. There is a natural dependance between the books of *Moſes* and oſe of the prophets in general; for the prophets were continually reoaching the kings and people with the crimes which they committed ainſt the law of God propoſed by *Moſes*.

VI. There is a natural dependance between the writings of the former and of the latter prophets. So *Jeremiah* is quoted by *Daniel* (*k*), foretelling the time when the deſolations of *Jeruſalem* were to have an d: this he propoſes, not as if he had learnt it by a revelation, but as thing which he had found out by an attentive examination of the proecy of *Jeremiah*.

VII. There is an exact connexion of theſe oracles with the hiſtory of e time, which is often interwoven with the prophecies. One ſees it the books of *Iſaiah*, *Jeremiah*, and *Daniel*; the other hiſtorical books t being altogether ſo particular as theſe prophetical books are.

VIII. In ſhort, one ſees that theſe books are interwoven with oracles ncerning ancient events, and people which have now no exiſtence; ſo at hinders us from ſuſpecting any forgery.

I ſhall not repeat here the common arguments which eſtabliſh the edit of theſe books; I brought in moſt of them, when I eſtabliſhed the thority of the books of *Moſes*. I ſhall only make ſome reflexions here, eſtabliſh the ſame truth.

CHAP. VI.

at the Manner of writing the Prophetical Books of the Old Teſtament, hews that thoſe Oracles could not have been forged after their Completion.

HAVE ſeveral things to take notice of, to make this truth more ſenſible. The firſt is taken from the neceſſary connexion of all the rts of the hiſtory of the Old Teſtament, the truth of which I have oved by ſeveral characters. This hiſtory is exactly written by ſeveral thors: now the hiſtory of the prophets, and of their oracles, is ſo

(*k*) Dan. ix. 2.

ſo exactly *framed* into the hiſtory, that it is impoſſible to take it out, without confounding the whole.

The books of *Samuel*, which were written by *Samuel*, by *Nathan*, and by *Gad*, as appears by 1. *Chron.* xxix. 29. contain the hiſtory from the year of the world 2888 to the year 2987.

The books of the *Kings* contain the hiſtory of the kings, and of the prophets, from the year 2989 to the year 3442.

The books of the *Chronicles* recapitulate the hiſtory, from the beginning of the world to the year 3468.

Ezra writ his hiſtory from the year 3468 to the year 3538.

Nehemiah continued it from the year 3550 to the year 3563.

Here is therefore, on the one ſide, an uninterrupted ſeries of hiſtory; and on the other ſide, a continued ſucceſſion of prophecies.

David, who began to reign in the year 2950, with ſeveral other prophets of that time, writ the moſt part of the *Pſalms*, which are full of oracles, and which were ſung by the people, as a part of the divine ſervice.

Iſaiah began his prophecy in 3246, and died in the year 3306. *Hoſea*, *Micah*, and *Nahum*, were contemporary with him.

Jeremiah began his prophecy in the year 3375, and lived at the ſame time with *Zephaniah*.

Daniel was carried into *Babylon* in 3401, and propheſied until 3470.

Ezekiel propheſied at *Babylon* in 3509.

Haggai and *Zechariah* propheſied in 3590, ſoon after *Ezra*, in the time of *Nehemiah*.

Malachi ſeems to have lived until the year 3589.

Can we therefore in the leaſt imagine that a hiſtory ſhould be ſo intermixed with prophecies and oracles, without conceiving at the ſame time the truth of both by an invincible neceſſity?

But we may make a ſecond reflexion hereupon.

There are three general characters which diſtinguiſh prophets very ſenſibly from the generality of authors.

I. They were public cenſors: let us but read the hiſtory of *Iſaiah*'s conduct, who called all the heads of the people, rulers of *Sodom*; or that of *Jeremiah*, chap. xxxvi, or of any other of the prophets in general.

II. They were comforters of the people, when they had brought them to repentance by their preaching. There are as many inſtances of this, as there are prophets.

III. They foretold remarkable occurrences, happy or unfortunate, long before there was any probability that they ſhould happen.

It is impoſſible to conſider theſe characters, without ſeeing that the ſtate of affairs was that which gave a foundation for their ſermons: ſo that one muſt of neceſſity have framed their hiſtory of new, to give ground for a forgery. This change in the ſtyle of the prophets, follows the circumſtances of the *Jewiſh* ſtate exactly. All that *Iſaiah* or *Jeremiah* ſay, will hold no longer than whilſt you ſuppoſe the ſtate of the *Jews* to be as corrupt as the hiſtory of that time repreſents it. But if you ſuppoſe it to be as the hiſtory does diſtinctly explain it, nothing can be imagined more forcible than their ſermons; for as they joined oracles with

with promiſes in their *thundering* ſermons, ſo one ſees that they cannot be parted.

One may make another reflexion upon this matter, by ſhewing that theſe oracles and theſe books were ſo famous amongſt the *Jews*, that no forgery can be ſuppoſed.

The times in which they were writ, are a great proof, for they appeared upon very remarkable occaſions.

One may rank the prophets into four orders, according to the ſeveral times in which they appeared: *David*, and the prophets of his time; thoſe who lived before the *Babyloniſh* captivity; as *Jonah*, *Hoſea*, *Joel*, *Amos*, *Obadiah*, *Iſaiah*, *Micah*, *Nahum*, *Habakkuk*, *Zephaniah*, *Jeremiah*.

Thoſe who propheſied during the captivity; *Jeremiah*, *Ezekiel*, and *Daniel*.

Thoſe who lived after their return from *Babylon*; *Haggai*, *Zechariah*, and *Malachi*.

Now we have an equal aſſurance of all theſe prophets, that they were famous.

Who can deny the oracles of *David* to have been famous, when they were preſerved amongſt their public hymns?

One ſees that *Micah's* prediction ſaved *Jeremiah*, whom they would have condemned for propheſying the ruin of the temple under *Jehoiakim*, when *Micah* had propheſied the ſame thing under *Hezekiah*, that is to ſay, about one hundred and twenty years before this prediction of *Jeremiah:* here is an event which aſſures us without affectation, that this prophecy was very well known. Were not therefore the other prophecies, which were in the hands of the *Jews*, very well known by the whole nation?

The other prophets lived in very remarkable times: *Iſaiah* under *Jotham*, *Ahaz*, and *Manaſſeh*, impious princes; the laſt of which put him to a cruel death, for the freedom of his cenſures and predictions.

There was, in the time of every prophet, a great number of circumſtances which may be enlarged upon, and which will further prove that their works muſt of neceſſity have been very public, and very famous amongſt the *Jews*.

We muſt not here neglect what does more particularly regard the perſons of the prophets.

I. Some of them were prieſts, that is to ſay, public miniſters of their religion. *Jeremiah* and *Ezekiel* were of that number: this may be obſerved in reading of their works, and in obſerving the nature of their revelations, which were for the moſt part accommodated by God to thoſe ideas about which the prophets were moſt employed.

II. Some were very illuſtrious by their birth: thus *David*, for inſtance, was king of *Iſrael*, *Iſaiah* was a prince of the blood, and *Daniel* was one of the princes of *Judah*; which may be eaſily found out by conſidering the majeſty of their ſtyle, and greatneſs of their expreſſions.

III. Some were very contemptible by their employment, and by their birth: ſo *Amos*, for inſtance, and thoſe other prophets whoſe father is

barely named, without joining to it any honourable title, if the *Jews* obſervation has any ſtrength.

Now, it is well known, that though the gift of propecy made him who had it ſufficiently famous, yet the character of the perſon often made the prophecy famous. Sometimes indeed the meanneſs of the perſon, as in *Amos*, made the work to be more regarded, every body taking occaſion, from the ancient profeſſion of the prophet, to conſider the prophecies which he publiſhed with more attention.

One ought to obſerve with care, that thoſe prophets whoſe writings are preſerved, as well as thoſe who did not write, were continually ſtruck at by falſe prophets, who oppoſed them with great heat. Since then we have no prophecies preſerved but of thoſe whoſe predictions were accompliſhed, the event juſtifying the truth of their predictions, with regard to particular facts near the time which they had foretold to eſtabliſh their authority; whereas the predictions of others, wanting this character, were neglected, and at laſt abſolutely loſt; it appears plainly, that thoſe which remain were things of the greateſt reputation among the *Jews*.

Beſides, I may add, that one needs only read their books, to ſee that they not only foretold obſcure things, or what particularly concerned their ſtate, but alſo things of a more ſplendid nature, the overthrow of kingdoms, of cities, the deſtruction of whole nations, the deſtruction of their own city, with its re-eſtabliſhment; matters which would render their books very illuſtrious, and which would cauſe them to be read, not only by the *Jews*, but alſo by the neighbour nations, the *Ammonites*, *Moabites*, *Aſſyrians*, *Perſians*, *Egyptians*, &c.

Is not this therefore a very particular thing, and that which made the prophets very illuſtrious, that the great luſtre of the prophets continued but for a certain time? There have been none ſince the year 3553. Their glory appeared in the hiſtory of eight ages; but it does not extend itſelf any farther. Now why, I pray, ſhould there be no impoſtors after *Malachi*, as well as there were impoſtors before him?

One may imagine, perhaps, that the prophecies were immediately diſperſed, ſome being uttered in one place, and ſome in another: ſome in the kingdom of *Judah*, and others in the kingdom of *Iſrael*; ſome in *Babylon*, others in *Egypt*; which might give opportunities for impoſtors. But,

I. This objection may be ſtrongly retorted back: for how can we conceive, that in the diviſion which ſeparated the *Iſraelites* from the *Jews*, thoſe of *Judah* would charge themſelves with the writings publiſhed in a kingdom ſo much an enemy to them, without examination, when every thing which comes from thence ought to appear ſuſpected?

II. They were all collected into particular volumes. But the prophecies of *Hoſea*, *Iſaiah*, and *Jeremy*, and the moſt conſiderable of the reſt, are preſerved in books which contain many other things.

III. They are all exactly joined with the hiſtory of the ſame nation, each one in a place where there was an equal concern to preſerve and to gather them together. But beſides, they were all collected into one body. In ſhort, the ſeventy-two Interpreters tranſlated them into *Greek* in

in the year of the world 3727, and ſo ſubmitted them to the examination of the *Egyptians*; and this alſo keeps us from doubting of their truth.

This tranſlation was made but one hundred thirty and eight years after *Malachi*, the laſt of the prophets.

But what judgment ſoever may be made of theſe reflexions, the deſign whereof is only to eſtabliſh the reputation of theſe prophecies, and of the books wherein they are written, that ſo no room may be left for any ſuſpicions of forgery; I ſhall add two conſiderations to what I have ſaid already, which ought to appear convincing to every attentive man.

I. One can ſuſpect none but the *Jews* as forgers of theſe oracles. Now, not to ſay any thing of the abſurdity of ſuppoſing that a whole nation ſhould have ſubſcribed to ſuch an impoſture, all the *Jews* throughout the world were, after their return from the captivity, ſtrongly prepoſſeſſed with an opinion of the Meſſiah's being a great temporal king: and they have the ſame belief to this very hour, in all places of the world, wherever they are diſperſed.

This being once laid down, I affirm it to be impoſſible that the *Jews* ſhould forge oracles which aſſert expreſsly, that the Meſſiah ſhould be put to death in ſo very odious a manner; for, as I ſhall afterwards ſhew, the oldeſt doctors attributed to the Meſſiah all thoſe oracles which ſpeak of the death of the Meſſiah according to the Chriſtians, and which they themſelves in proceſs of time were forced to interpret of two Meſſiahs, one expoſed to a world of miſeries, and the other only glorious: or at leaſt, I may ſay it is impoſſible that the *Jews* ſhould conſent to a forgery which thwarted their common ideas and pretenſions in ſo very ſenſible a manner.

II. The ſecond conſideration eſtabliſhes the ſame truth with no leſs firmneſs, which is, that the Call of the Gentiles to have a ſhare in the bleſſings of the covenant which God made with the people of *Iſrael*, was the thing in the world from which the *Jews* had the greateſt averſion: they looked upon the bleſſings which the Meſſiah was to communicate, as advantages entirely reſerved for thoſe of their own nation. How then can we conceive that the *Jews* ſhould forge ſo many oracles which ſhould thwart their prejudices ſo ſenſibly? or how can we imagine that a whole people would authoriſe with their approbation an impoſture ſo contrary, and ſo very oppoſite to their own opinions?

But it is no hard thing to imagine, that when the *Jews* were once perſuaded of the authority of their prophets, either by their miracles, or by the ready accompliſhment of every oracle which they had *publicly* pronounced, they ſhould receive their books with a profound ſubmiſſion, and preſerve them with the utmoſt care. But it appears to be an incomprehenſible thing, for a people to receive impoſtures contrary to their prejudices, and impoſtures reiterated ſo often, without any ground, but what a vaſt number of records never before heard of would produce.

But I ſuppoſe theſe reflexions will ſuffice to eſtabliſh the truth of the hiſtorical and prophetical books of the Old Teſtament: ſo that there will be no need of alledging particular proofs, which might demonſtrate

the truth of each book in particular, which would carry me out to too great a length.

I shall now consider the oracles themselves, and I shall shew the progress of the light of this revelation, with respect to the promise of the Messiah. That this progress may be the better observed, I shall do three things, as I have formerly observed, without which the mind of a wise reader will not receive satisfaction.

I. I shall explain in a few words the reason why these oracles are interwoven with several histories or prophecies which seem to have no relation to the promise of the Messiah.

II. I shall give such rules as will serve to justify the application which both *Jews* and *Christians* have equally made of several oracles only to the Messiah.

III. I shall set the oracles according to the order of time, which will manifest the advancement and progress of that light which is to be found in the revelation itself: as, indeed, it is natural to conceive that God should explain himself more clearly in this matter, in proportion as the things themselves were nearer to their completion.

CHAP. VII.

For what Reason the Oracles which relate to the Messiah, were interwoven with other Things which seem to be very widely distant.

ONE of the greatest difficulties which may be raised against the oracles of the Old Testament which concern the Messiah, is that surprising mixture which one sees of those oracles, and of other subjects which seem to be widely distant from any idea of the Messiah.

There are none so profane as to deny, that if in the same author, and in the same chapter, any man should read in one continued series predictions which should explain the miraculous birth of the Messiah, his family, his preaching, his miracles, his sufferings, his resurrection, his ascension into Heaven, the sending of the Holy Ghost, the calling of the *Gentiles*, but that the history of the gospel would sufficiently justify Jesus Christ to be the promised Messiah.

But they take it to be a very strange thing, that the apostles should apply several passages in ancient authors to the history of Jesus Christ, though the whole contexture of their books do not seem to oblige us to make any such interpretations.

They therefore suppose that the apostles made several fortunate allusions to the more remarkable passages in those ancient authors, which may pass for predictions of those events which afterwards happened; just as *Nonnus* wrote the history of the gospel in *Homer*'s verses, and as *Eudoxia*

doxia made a *Cento* out of *Virgil*'s poem, which contained the ſame hiſtory, though neither *Homer* nor *Virgil* had any of the myſteries of the Chriſtian religion then in view.

That this apparent difficulty may be ſolved, it will be neceſſary to examine three things: I. The matter of fact itſelf. II. The reaſons which gave occaſion for the doing of it. III. The impreſſion which this fact has produced in the minds of men, to this very time.

For the firſt: Though it is well known that common uſe does not allow men to join foreign ideas in the ſame diſcourſe, yet we may eaſily conceive that God might and ought to do it, if we will allow what may be eaſily collected, that he reſolved to ſend the Meſſiah into the world: ſuch a practice was the more natural, becauſe the ancient Patriarchs before *Moſes*, and *Moſes* himſelf, who formed the commonwealth of the *Jews*, had prepared the minds of the people to ſuch ſort of expreſſions as were raiſed above the preſent ſubject.

And certainly, if one takes but the pains to conſider the wiſdom and beauty of the authors who writ theſe prophetical books on the one ſide, and the character of the writers of the New Teſtament on the other, he would perceive, that if theſe words, *That it might be fulfilled*, were of neceſſity to be changed into theſe, *As one may perceive a ſort of completion of ſuch or ſuch paſſages in the Old Teſtament*, yet, notwithſtanding that, the moſt part of thoſe quotations would evince an exact accompliſhment, and the oracles which they alledge would bear a juſt proportion to thoſe events which are related by the evangeliſts in our Saviour's life.

Can any thing be more ſingular than the prophecy in the ſeventh of *Iſaiah*, of the Meſſiah's being born of a virgin; of the piercing of his hands and feet, *Pſal.* xxii. of the mixture of gall which was offered him to drink, hinted at, *Pſalm* lx. 22. of his being ſold for thirty pieces of ſilver, *Zechar.* xi. 3. or than ſeveral others of a like nature, which at preſent I ſhall not ſtand to reckon up?

It muſt be confeſſed, however, that theſe oracles are interwoven for the moſt part with matters relating to events happening in the time when each prophet lived, or which ſeem to be applicable perſonally to the prophets.

Three orders or reaſons may be conceived, which will juſtify the wiſdom of God in the ordering of theſe oracles in a way which ſeems ſo contrary to the common practice of the world.

The firſt order contains reaſons drawn from the perſon of the Meſſiah himſelf, of whom we ſpeak.

The ſecond order contains thoſe which ariſe from the conſideration of the people amongſt whom the Meſſiah was to be born.

The third contains thoſe reaſons which reſpect other nations amongſt whom the Meſſiah was to be preached. I ſhall examine theſe three ſorts by themſelves; and I hope that we may gather from thence, that the eternal wiſdom preſided over this mixture of theſe oracles which relate to the Meſſiah, with other ideas which ſeem to be wholly foreign to the ſubject.

In ſhort, it may be urged, that the belief of a Meſſiah formed of ſo apparent contradictions, cannot eaſily be received of the ſudden: a

Meſſiah of the ſeed of *David*, whom *David* calls his *Lord*; a Meſſiah who complains that he is *forſaken by God*, whom however he ought to adore; a Meſſiah born with the weakneſſes of youth, who at the ſame time is called *a mighty God*, and the *father of eternity*, &c.

However, theſe ideas which ſeem ſo oppoſite ought of neceſſity to have been ſo ſeparated by the prophets, leſt they ſhould have been looked upon as chimerical deſcriptions, and incompatible in one and the ſame ſubject.

A ſecond reflexion which may be made upon this matter, is, That the *Jews* were bound not only to preſerve their oracles, but alſo to execute them in part: thus, for inſtance, there was a neceſſity for them to reject the Meſſiah, to deliver him up to the *Gentiles* to be crucified; there was a neceſſity that their puniſhment ſhould be as ſignal as their crime, and that they ſhould be diſperſed over the world, after the deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, as the prophets have clearly ſhewn. Now how could all this have ever been effected, if the deſcription of the Meſſiah by the prophets had been as hiſtorical as that of the apoſtles, or the evangeliſts, who gave us only a narrative of matters of fact?

In a word, was it not the intereſt of the *Gentiles*, to whom the goſpel was to be preached, that theſe oracles ſhould be ſcattered up and down the writings of theſe ancient authors? They were to be called, upon the rejection of the *Jews*: the *Jews* were bound to preſerve the books of the Old Teſtament, after they were caſt off by God, that the authority of theſe books and theſe oracles might be beyond all conteſt, as teſtimonies with which we are furniſhed by the adverſe party, which ought to have place, until the fulneſs of the *Gentiles* ſhould profeſs Chriſtianity. Let any one therefore judge if it was not neceſſary, in this ſtate of affairs, that there ſhould be ſome obſcurity in the prophetical deſcriptions; and by conſequence, that this interweaving of foreign ideas with thoſe which concerned the Meſſiah, as alſo this diſperſion of the oracles through different places of the ſacred writers, was not neceſſary; and ſo much the more, as they were uttered upon ſeveral occaſions by different authors.

And we may affirm it, as a certainty, that, according to the purpoſe of God, this obſcurity did not hinder either *Jews* or *Pagans* from perceiving thoſe *ruling* ideas of a Meſſiah, when they read the Old Teſtament. Neither was the diſperſion of theſe oracles through ſo many different places any greater hindrance to their application; ſince the *Jews* laid it down as a conſtant maxim, that the accompliſhment of every thing which we find to be foretold as great and illuſtrious by the prophets, ought to be looked for in the perſon of the Meſſiah, when the events of a nearer date did not anſwer to the greatneſs or magnificence of the predictions.

Several ages had paſſed, from the time in which the prophet had foretold that the Meſſiah was to be born at *Bethlehem*; and yet we ſee that the idea of it continued very freſh among the *Jews* in our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt's time, as is plain from the anſwer which they gave to *Herod*.

There are ſeveral other examples might be given, which ſhew that the *Jews* in our Saviour's time applied the very ſame oracles to the Meſſiah which

hich we do; and without queſtion, if it had not been ſo, the apoſtles ould firſt have proved that theſe oracles had relation to the Meſſiah, hich they took for granted, as a thing conſtantly acknowledged; hereas now they only endeavoured in the goſpel to juſtify that Jeſus hriſt was the Meſſiah, by ſhewing, one by one, that all the characters hich the *Jews* attributed to the Meſſiah, were to be found in him.

Beſides, it is manifeſt, from our Saviour's explication of the cxth *Pſalm*, at though the *Jews* could not conceive the ſolution of that difficulty hich naturally appears in thoſe words, *The Lord ſaid unto my Lord, ſit ou at my right hand*, yet afterwards they immediately applied that oracle the Meſſiah, without ſeeking after any other ſubjects to which they ight apply it, as the *Jews* endeavour to do at this day.

But after theſe remarks upon the mixture of thoſe oracles which relate the Meſſiah, with others which ſeem to be of a more foreign nature, e ought to come to ſome general rules by which we are to apply the ncient oracles to the Meſſiah.

CHAP. VIII.

General Rules for the Underſtanding of ancient Oracles, and for the Application of them to the Meſſiah.

I. AS it appears very natural to conceive that the moſt ancient revelations ought to be expreſſed in the moſt general terms, beauſe they were furtheſt from the time of their accompliſhment, and ſo ne ought to find in them a more perfect delineation of the deſign of God; yet it is viſible, however, that they ought to contribute very uch to the underſtanding of thoſe later Oracles, becauſe, if theſe later nes do really contain a more particular explication of his deſign in ending the Meſſiah into the world, yet they ought always to follow thoſe leas which God at firſt made uſe of to make his deſign known in the orld.

II. It is natural to grant, that when God had told the *Jews*, by *Jacob* nd *Balaam*, that the coming of the Meſſiah was not ſuddenly to happen, if he intended to bring them to a certain knowledge of the Meſſiah fter a long revolution of years, by thoſe ceremonial and judicial laws hich he eſtabliſhed, that he ought to breed them up in an expectation f the Meſſiah, by lively ideas, and by oracles which ſhould particularly xplain the manner and circumſtances of his appearance.

III. It is no leſs natural to acknowledge, that when God promiſed ome illuſtrious perſon, or ſome great advantage to the *Jewiſh* nation, e did it only to entertain the people with an expectation of the Meſſiah, nd, upon that account, that he might and ought to join the promiſe of he Meſſiah with it, as the principal object which the *Jews* ought always o have in view, until it ſhould actually happen.

In short, there are two sorts of oracles in the Old Testament: the first are such as it is impossible to apply to any other besides the Messiah; as, for instance, *the place of his birth*; *the seed of the woman shall break the serpent's head*; *the Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me*; *unto him ye shall hearken* (*l*). Whereupon he that added the relation of *Moses*'s death, takes notice that after that there arose up no Prophet in *Israel* like unto *Moses*.

The second are such as seem to agree in part to somebody else besides the Messiah, though we may find there also such particular characters, that it is impossible to apply them perfectly, and in their utmost extent, according to the whole force of their expression, to any other subject besides the Messiah. And so *Balaam* seems to have spoken of *David*, *Numb.* xxiii as *Julian* the apostate maintains, and of his victories over the *Moabites*, in the same place where he promises the Messiah, and where he speaks of the manner of his subduing the children of *Seth*; and so *David*, in the second *Psalm*, speaks of the oppositions which he met with, in his advancement to the throne, but in terms too great and too emphatical to be applied to him alone.

Those principles which I have now established, that God promised the Messiah in general terms, but without any intention of sending him into the world until several ages had been passed, gave rise to these two sorts of oracles. On the one side, there was a necessity of explaining this promise distinctly from time to time; and, on the other side, there was a necessity of accommodating himself to the desires of the *Jews*, by joining these ideas with every thing that was great and considerable in those events, and in those persons to whom the prophetic spirit intended to add a lustre by its predictions.

The *Jews* are agreed at present, as they were also in our Saviour's time, in the application of the most part of those oracles in the Old Testament, which the Christians apply to the Messiah; and if they dispute some of them, which they explain in a sense perfectly forced, yet they cannot dispute these following truths.

I. That the most part of those oracles which we apply to the Messiah, were applied in the same manner by the *Jewish* Doctors in our Saviour's time: as the CX. *Psalm*, for instance, which has relation to the nature and glory of the Messiah; the II. *Psalm*, which has respect to the conspiracy of the princes and the people against the Messiah; that place in *Micah* which fixes the birth of the Messiah to *Bethlehem*, &c.

II. That, as they thought themselves obliged to make two Messiahs, because of the apparent contradictions which are to be found in those various events which are applied to the Messiah in those predictions; some perfectly glorious, and others every way contemptible; so there is no injustice done, in explaing those oracles which at first seem only to have relation to one single person, of the Messiah, and of some other person.

III. That since they themselves believe, that their ancestors might lawfully pass from one sense to another in their explications of those oracles, so that they were permitted to apply an oracle to some other subject, which did not seem to agree exactly enough to that subject which their

(*l*) Gen. iii. 15. Deut. xviii. 15. Deut. xxxiv. 10.

eir anceſtors had firſt in view, as the particular ſubject concerning
hich the oracle treated; ſo it is not only juſt, but neceſſary too, to
ſs from one ſubject to another, as the Apoſtles have actually done.

IV. That we ought to pay a much greater deference to the opinion
the ancient *Jews*, than of thoſe who have been ſowered by their mi-
ies and diſputes to ſuch a degree, that they have loſt that principle of
uity which keeps men from denying the moſt evident truths, and
hich have been the moſt univerſally acknowledged by a whole nation,
at was not prepoſſeſſed with ſo great a degree of obſtinacy.

But we ought to obſerve, beſides, that this ſeeming confuſion of thoſe
acles which relate to the Meſſiah, with other ſubjects treated of by the
rophets, aroſe from ſeveral cauſes.

I. From the Prophets often joining the ideas of the principal pro-
iſe, the ſending of the Meſſiah, with the promiſe of thoſe means which
ere abſolutely neceſſary for the accompliſhment of that promiſe, as the
reſervation of the *Jews*, for inſtance. So the captivity of the *Iſraelites*
Egypt, and their departure from thence, with their ſettling in the land
Canaan, which he had promiſed them before, were foretold, as neceſ-
ry means, in the order of Providence, to the execution of the great
eſign of God.

For ſo the *Babyloniſh* captivity, and their deliverance therefrom, which
re both foretold, are foretold as ſteps towards the execution of the pro-
iſe of ſending the Meſſiah.

And ſo likewiſe, when they foretold the perſecutions by *Antiochus*, and
ne other neighbouring nations, they alſo foretell the deliverance which
God would grant to the *Jews*, and their re-eſtabliſhment until the
irth of the Meſſiah, which was the accompliſhment of that great pro-
iſe.

II. This ſeeming confuſion aroſe from the writing of theſe books
iece by piece, which afterwards were put in this order, without having
lways a regard to the time in which they were written, and with-
ut taking notice of all the occaſions which engaged the Prophets to
rite. And thus we ſee the prophecies which relate to the Meſſiah
oined to ſeveral other tranſactions, and to ſeveral other predictions,
hoſe connexion is not always ſo very evident.

III. It ariſes from the writing of the prophecies each by themſelves,
o that all thoſe of the ſame Prophet were put together as they came out,
naking only a new chapter in the work; whereas they ought to be con-
idered rather with relation to the matter, than to the order in which
hey lie in the book, as we have it at the preſent: for the Prophets often
orrow their light from what they themſelves had ſaid ſome time be-
ore, or from what ſome other Prophet had foretold, which ought to be
bſerved particularly of thoſe who lived about the ſame time.

But beſides thoſe rules which I propoſed in the beginning of this chap-
er, and beſides thoſe obſervations of the joining the oracles which re-
ate to the Meſſiah with other ſubjects, I muſt add two rules more, which
may be uſeful in determining the ſenſe of great numbers of oracles which
are expreſſed in figurative terms. The firſt is, that it is natural to con-
ceive, that when the Prophets were to ſpeak of the Meſſiah, and when
they were intent upon the deſcription of his kingdom, they ſhould make

uſe

uſe of expreſſions which ſeemed to foretel a ſort of overturning of nature which ſhould happen at that time: but then theſe expreſſions ought to be underſtood in a figurative ſenſe, in the ſame ſpiritual ſenſe in which the Chriſtians underſtood them, as the famous *Maimonides* allows in that paſſage of *Iſaiah*, where the *wolf* and the *lamb* are ſaid to feed together (*m*).

Secondly, ſince the Meſſiah is deſcribed as one who ſhould unite, in his own perſon, the glory of the Divinity and the meanneſs of the human nature together, we ought to underſtand thoſe oracles in ſuch a manner, that what is *great* in thoſe prophetical deſcriptions, ſhould not contradict the more contemptible part, when we conſider the Meſſiah as clothed with all the meanneſſes of the human nature. Theſe ideas, which are often joined in one and the ſame oracles, ought to be exactly applied to the different conſideration which the Prophets had of the Meſſiah, or to thoſe various ſtates through which they themſelves aſſure us the Meſſiah was to paſs.

An intelligent reader will eaſily judge, that I might have added a third rule to the two former; which is, that when a perſon who has all the characters of a Prophet, applies an old oracle to any ſubject, one cannot reaſonably diſpute his application. This the Chriſtians aſſure us was done by the Apoſtles in a very great number of oracles. But becauſe this ſuppoſes a prophetic character in the apoſtles before it has been eſtabliſhed by ſolid proofs, I ſhall wave the propoſal of it at preſent.

After theſe general remarks, I ſhall gather together thoſe oracles in the Old Teſtament, which relate to the Meſſiah. I might here follow the order of the matters, by bringing under each article thoſe oracles which relate to it, which would give a great light to the ſubject, as *Euſebius* has rightly obſerved, and as he has practiſed himſelf in his books *de Demonſtratione Evangelicâ*. However, I rather choſe to follow the order of time in which theſe oracles were uttered, which did not ſeem improper to explain thoſe truths which are contained in thoſe oracles.

In ſhort, this is of great importance: I. Becauſe it is very natural to conſider the ſeries of God's deſign, and the connexion which may be found in thoſe ideas which are made uſe of to expreſs it.

II. Becauſe of the neceſſity of the increaſe of light in the Revelations, proportionably as the time drew near; ſo that it is of uſe to obſerve how the Divine wiſdom followed this natural order in making the later oracles clearer than the former, and in hinting, by little and little, a greater number of circumſtances, by which it was neceſſary to explain them.

III. Becauſe this ſerves to give us a very ſtrong proof that God intended to furniſh us, from the Scriptures themſelves, with that which ſhould fix us in a belief of this capital truth in our religion. In ſhort, when the truth of each of the books in the Old Teſtament is once approved, and their age ſet down, it appears that ſeveral Prophets did agree wonderfully, without any concert, in the explicationof the ſame truths, at ſeveral times, and in ſeveral places and circumſtances, which hinder men, for the moſt part, from agreeing in the moſt common matters which are the ſubjects of their reflexions.

I have

(*m*) Lib. de *Regibus*, cap. xii.

have already conſidered that the wiſdom of God followed rules very formable to the condition and inclinations of the Patriarchs, when oke of the Meſſiah. We may ſee the ſame conduct in the follow-times.

o, ſince God had promiſed children to *Adam* in *Abel*'s ſtead, one may that he alſo promiſed *David* a ſon who ſhould ſit upon his throne. xplains almoſt all the circumſtances of his coming, his humiliation, exaltation, the oppoſitions he ſhould meet with, the victories he ild obtain, and his offices, prophetical, prieſtly, and royal.

One ſees afterwards, that the Prophets explain, in a more particular ner, all theſe ideas which *David* had already propoſed. *Iſaiah* ſpeaks is birth by a virgin, of his ſpiritual gifts, of his miracles, of his erings, of his reſurrection, of his calling of all nations in to his wor-, and of his caſting off the *Jews*.

Thoſe who come after, point out the place particularly, and the town, re the Meſſiah was to be born; they deſcribe his covenant, and the ing of the Gentiles to the ſervice of the God of *Iſrael*.

n ſhort, they deſcribe both the character of the fore-runner of the ſiah, and the empire under which he was to appear, and the very in which he was to die, as *Daniel* particularly doth.

cannot undertake to relate all the oracles which are contained in the ks of the Old Teſtament, they are ſo very numerous: but I hope eaſt, to mark the more principal, and the moſt illuſtrious ones, and xplain them in ſuch a manner, that all ſhall be obliged to acknow-ge, I. That God deſigned to give infallible proofs to his church, of deſign in ſending the Meſſiah into the world, and to preſerve the tinual remembrance of him, as of a perſon who was promiſed to give comfort to his church, and whoſe coming ſhould bring ſalvation to mankind; II. That the care which he took in ſpecifying all the umſtances of his coming into the world, ſhews that he deſigned to vent the ſcandal which the abject life and death of a Meſſiah might duce, and the falſe judgments which men might form of the works a Divine wiſdom, when they only judge of them by the outſide; . That he deſigned to give an infallible proof, that this ſending of Meſſiah was the work of his wiſdom and fidelity, which at laſt ac-mpliſhed a thing, the deſign whereof had been propoſed to mankind mediately after the fall.

CHAP. IX.

Thoſe Oracles concerning the Meſſiah which are to be found in the Book of GENESIS.

BEGIN with thoſe Oracles which are contained in the book of *Geneſis*, ſince it is convenient to touch them all over again in few ds.

The

The firſt oracle is compriſed in theſe terms, *Gen.* iii. 15. *I will enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy ſeed and her ſeed; ſhall bruiſe thy head, and thou ſhalt bruiſe his heel.*

This oracle has conſiderable advantages, though it is expreſſed in fig rative terms. God uttered it in the beginning of the world, after had given ſentence againſt *Adam*, and the woman, and the ſerpent, in very ſenſible manner, even under a human ſhape, if we may dare to affi it. He uttered it before the head of all mankind, which ought to ma it conſiderable to all his poſterity. He expreſſes it by an alluſion to t nature of the temptation, and to the form of the ſerpent, which t tempter had took upon him. He preſerves thereby the memory of t temptation, by inſpiring all mankind with an invincible hatred agai all ſerpents in general, though the tempter had took the ſhape but one particular kind, for an inſtrument to accompliſh his deſign.

In ſhort, this oracle clearly ſhews, I. That it ſhould be particular the ſeed of the woman; *Adam* not being touched at. II. That the ſe of the woman, that is to ſay, the Meſſiah, ſhould deſtroy the power the ſerpent, expreſſed by the head, that is to ſay, the power of the Dev III. That this ſeed ſhould, however, receive a conſiderable wound fro the Devil, though it ſhould only touch his heel, the leaſt conſiderab part of the Meſſiah. IV. That all the bleſſings which God ſhould gi to mankind after the fall, ſhould be grounded upon the ſending of th ſeed into the world: this is more clearly expreſſed by God's telli *Abraham, That in thy ſeed all the nations of the earth ſhould be bleſſed* (*n*).

That this oracle, *Gen.* iii. has relation to the Meſſiah, is plain: I. B cauſe it is the ſource and abridgment of the whole revelation; II. B cauſe all the ancient *Jews* in effect underſtood it ſo; III. Becauſe t Apoſtles, in following the ideas of the ſynagogues, plainly referred the to the Meſſiah, by the alluſions which they make to them (*o*), *John* x *Romans* xvi. II. *Cor.* xi. I. *John* iii.

The ſecond oracle which relates to the Meſſiah, is contained in the terms, when God ſpoke to *Abraham*; *In thy ſeed ſhall all the nations of t earth be bleſſed.*

This oracle is very illuſtrious: I. By the perſon of *Abraham*, who God made the depoſitary of it, and who made himſelf ready to ſacrifi his own ſon: II. By the frequent repetitions which God made to th Patriarch, uſing in effect all thoſe ways which he afterwards followed his revelations to the Patriarchs, for fifty years together, from the ye 2083 to the year 2133 of the world: III. Becauſe it was accompani by the circumciſion; ſo that, though it foretold that the advantages ſhou be in common to all nations, yet it limited the Meſſiah to be born *Abraham*'s ſeed.

It alſo intimates very clearly, I. That the bleſſings which it promi ſhould be in common to all nations; II. That this bleſſing ſhould quite of another nature from temporal ones, as the increaſe, for inſtanc and the power of *Abraham*'s poſterity, which had been promiſed to hi before. St. *Paul*'s reflexions, *Gal.* iii. 8. That God ſpake of ſeed in t ſingular number, is very remarkable; and ſo much the more, becauſe t *Jews* made a like obſervation upon a parallel place in the Old Teſtamen

(*n*) Gen. xxii. 18. (*o*) *Targum in h. l.*

God repeated this promiſe when he ſpoke to *Iſaac* in the year 2200, o *Jacob* in the year 2245, *Gen.* xxviii. 14. *And thy ſeed ſhall be duſt of the earth; and thou ſhalt ſpread abroad to the weſt, and to the and to the north, and to the ſouth: and in thee, and in thy ſeed, ſhall families of the earth be bleſſed*, ſo one ought to repeat again the ſame ions. This ought only to be added, That God reſtrained the ur of bringing forth the Meſſiah to *Jacob*, the ſon of *Iſaac*, that the *ites* might not come in to challenge the right, as I have very par- rly explained in my reflexions upon *Geneſis*.

e come now to the oracle which *Jacob* gave in the year 2315. It is f the cleareſt predictions in the whole Bible, and it is expreſſed in terms: Judah, *thou art he whom thy brethren ſhall praiſe; thy hand he in the neck of thine enemies: thy father's children ſhall bow down be- hee.* Judah *is a lion's whelp; from the prey, my ſon, thou art gone up: ped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion: who ſhall rouſe him The ſceptre ſhall not depart from* Judah, *nor a law-giver from between et, until* Shiloh *come; and unto him ſhall the gathering of the people be. ing his foal unto the vine, and his aſs's colt unto the choice vine; he d his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes. His eyes he red with wine, and his teeth white with milk. Gen.* xlix. 8.—12. ow very well, that ſome of the *Jews* have pretended that *Moſes* t to be underſtood for *Shiloh*; but this is ſo ridiculous an opinion, there is not the leaſt probability to maintain it. What ſceptre had *h*, before *Moſes* came? How was *Moſes* the expectation of the *Gen-* and the object of their hope?

nd, indeed, the body of the *Jewiſh* nation are agreed, that this oracle neant of the Meſſiah; ſo *Onkelos* the *Chaldee* paraphraſt, ſo the *Jeru- Targum*, and *Jonathan*'s, ſo *R. Solomon Jarchi*, *Abenezra*, and *hi*, are agreed.

ow theſe reflexions may be naturally drawn from this oracle, which uttered upon his death-bed.

This oracle is found amongſt a great number of oracles which con- the other tribes of the *Iſraelites*, and which were accompliſhed as ery tribe.

. This oracle contains ſeveral particular events which relate to te tranſactions in the tribe of *Judah*.

I. This oracle was, as it were, *Jacob*'s will in favour of *Judah*, at he when he divided amongſt his children their portions which they to expect from him.

. This was a preference of *Judah*, who was but the fourth, to *Reuben* was the eldeſt, and who, by conſequence, ought to have been the of his family. The ſceptre, and the authority of legiſlator, was niſed to *Judah*, which did not belong to him by the right of his

acob therefore prepared his children to look for an accompliſhment oſe promiſes made to *Abraham* in *Judah*, as well for the kings who to be deſcended from him, as for the nations of the earth who were e bleſſed in *Abraham*'s ſeed.

ut we muſt go yet further. I ſhall therefore obſerve, I. That this hecy particularly regarded the tribe of *Judah*, as all the preceding and

and following oracles concerned those tribes whose heads were t
named by *Jacob*.

II. That this prophecy concerns the tribe of *Judah*, as settled in
land of *Canaan*, by a distinct establishment from the other tribes.
short, it is certain that the tribe of *Judah* had some superiority. T
God, for instance, commanded that tribe to march the first, *Numb.*
& x. Its heads offered their presents first, *Numb.* vii. 11, 12, 13.
Joshua's time this tribe took its division, without drawing lots for it. C
sees that God ordered the tribe of *Judah* to lead the people out to
conquest of the rest of the country; one sees the same prerogatives
the book of *Judges*, though they were often of other tribes. From *Davi*
time to the taking of *Jerusalem* by *Nebuchadnezzar*, the kings were all
that tribe; and *Zorobabel* afterwards headed those who returned out
Chaldea. The book of the *Chronicles* names the tribe of *Judah* fir
Herod was the first king who was wholly a stranger.

III. That *Jacob* supposed that the tribe of *Judah* should be in possessi
of a form of government, and of a community, till the coming of t
Messiah. This was all very proper; and indeed we see that this tri
continued under its own governors, after the other tribes had be
transported, II. *Kings* xvii. 18. It almost swallowed up *Benjamin* a
Levi, who settled in their country; and indeed *Josephus* assures
that there were but few of the ten tribes who came back aga
into *Judea* under *Ezra*, for the greatest part of them stayed beyo
Euphrates; and we see that at last they gave their name to the wh
country.

IV. That this oracle was fulfilled by degrees. This I have obser
already of the pre-eminency of the tribe of *Judah* before *David*'s tim
which was a step to the advancement of it to the throne; and the lesse
ing of their dignity, which was to be entirely taken away when t
Messiah came, had also the same gradations. *David* was set upon t
throne over all *Israel*; but his house lost the government over ten trib
in his grandson *Rehoboam*'s time. His successors were tributary to t
neighbouring princes: whereas *David* carried his empire to the walls
Babylon; though afterwards the *Babylonians* subdued the *Jews*, and depos
the kings of *Judah*. At last, they absolutely lost all that authority whi
they had hitherto kept. They recovered a little in the person of *Zor*
babel; and though they were soon after invaded by the *Seleucidæ*, yet t
Maccabees preserved them a little, till *Herod* and the *Romans* took aw
all those remnants which they had yet left.

In carrying these views of this oracle further, we may yet further o
serve, I. That God intended to oblige the *Israelites* to wait for the scept
in the tribe of *Judah*. It must be there, before it could depart thenc
It was natural to conceive, that the *Jews* were to look yet much furth
than *David*. Those words, *It shall not depart*, denote a continuance
the sceptre in the house of *David* for some considerable time.

II. It is easy to comprehend a lessening of the dignity in the ter
lawgiver, [See *Judges* v. 14. מחקק] which God seems to have ma
use of, as a mark of the fall, which I have observed in the person
Zorobabel, who, as to the time, was about the middle of the oracle.

III.

I. In a word, it is eaſy to acknowledge that this oracle aſſigns the
a in groſs for the time of the coming of the Meſſiah, viz. the ruin
at authority and power which the *Jews* (properly ſo called from the
of *Judah*) ſhould enjoy after their re-eſtabliſhment. God could
explain himſelf more particularly, in ſtating the preciſe time when
thing ſhould happen.

here are two other very conſiderable oracles; one uttered by *Balaam*,
ne year 2553, before the king of the *Moabites*, who had ſent for him
urſe the people of *Iſrael* that lay in the plains; the other uttered the
year, by *Moſes*, the famous legiſlator of the *Jews*. The firſt is inſerted,
Moſes, in the xxivth chapter of *Numbers*; the other is in the xviiith
Deuteronomy.

he firſt is in theſe words: *I ſhall ſee him, but not now; I ſhall behold
but not nigh: there ſhall come a ſtar out of* Jacob, *and a ſceptre ſhall
ut of* Iſrael, *and ſhall ſmite all the corners of* Moab, *and deſtroy all the
ren of* Seth. *And* Edom *ſhall be a poſſeſſion*, Seir *alſo ſhall be a poſſeſſion
is enemies, and* Iſrael *ſhall do valiantly. Out of* Jacob *ſhall come he that
have dominion, and ſhall deſtroy him that remaineth of the city.*

ne ought to obſerve, that *Balaam*'s character, the preſence of the
and the elders of *Moab*, and all the circumſtances in which it was
ed, do advance its authority conſiderably.

ut the turn of his expreſſions is equally ſingular and remarkable.
e ſpeaks of the Meſſiah as of a ſtar, hinting out to us the celeſtial
re of the Meſſiah: whereas hitherto God had only deſcribed him
r the figure of a bare man: though the other was made ſufficiently
ligible, when the deſtruction of the empire of the tempter, and the
of procuring a bleſſing unto all the nations of the earth, which he
perſonally to enjoy, were attributed to him; things infinitely beyond
ower and condition of mankind to perform, were attributed to him.
He obſerves, that this perſon of whom he ſpeaks ſuch magnificent
gs, ought however to be deſcended from *Jacob*; which ratifies *Ja-*
prophecy in favour of *Judah*. III. Though he hints very clearly at
ffects of thoſe bleſſings and temporal victories which *Jacob*'s poſte-
was to obtain over their neighbours, yet at the ſame time he inſi-
es plainly enough, that the beſtowing of the bleſſing which all the
ns of the world ſhould obtain, was to be reſerved to *Jacob*'s ſeed;
he refuſed to retract thoſe promiſes of bleſſing which God had made
braham, *Iſaac*, and *Jacob*, to which oracles he made a ſenſible
ion.

nd it is very important to conſider, that the *Jews* always applied this
e to the Meſſiah, as may be ſeen by their *Chaldee* paraphraſt; and it
acknowledged ſo generally, that the famous *Achiba*, who lived under
emperor *Hadrian*, pretended that *Barchochebeba* was the Meſſiah,
uſe his name was *Chochab*, which is a *ſtar* in *Hebrew*; as if God in-
ed to mark that impoſtor for the true Meſſiah, by foretelling what
e he ſhould be called by.

he oracle which *Moſes* uttered a little before his death, is very con-
able. The people being terrified with the manner of God's ſpeaking
em upon Mount *Sinai*, deſired that God would no longer ſpeak as
d done before, but that *Moſes* ſhould give them an account of what-

ever

ever God ſhould command. Hereupon, God conſents to their requ
and promiſed them, by *Moſes*, that he would raiſe them up a prophet li
unto *Moſes*, to whom they ought to hearken, upon pain of bei
cut off.

He that made the addition to the laſt book of *Moſes*, wherein his dea
is deſcribed, takes notice that there never roſe up afterwards a Proph
in *Iſrael* like to *Moſes*. If it was *Ezra* who made that addition, then h
is a plain and clear deciſion againſt the *Jews*, ſome of whom aſſert, th
Joſhua or *Jeremiah* was the prophet whom *Moſes* promiſed: if it w
Eleazar, who lived in *Joſhua*'s time, then here *Joſhua* at leaſt is exclud
from this privilege of being deſigned by *Moſes*.

But it is to no purpoſe to ſtop at ſuch frivolous objections: one nee
only obſerve *Moſes*'s character, to take notice of four certain marks
Moſes's prophecies, which advance him infinitely above all the oth
Prophets. I. He had all the ſorts of revelations which are general
found amongſt all the Prophets. II. He was illuſtrious for great numb
of miracles. III. He not only reformed the errors and falſe ways
worſhip then prevailing amongſt the *Jews*, but he ſet up a new worſh
and a new form of religion. IV. He introduced this law, and this w
of worſhipping God, by ſuch a converſation with God, as one f
amongſt two intimate friends. In which of the Prophets may theſe fo
characters be found?

The *Galileans* themſelves teſtified plainly that theſe characters ou
only to be found in the perſon of the Meſſiah, when they ſaw
miracles of Jeſus Chriſt, *John* vi. 14; and the *Jews* acknowledged
ſame in our Saviour's time, when they applied that oracle to the Meſſi
John i. 45.

But if theſe oracles were obſcurely hinted at in this oracle, one m
ſee them clearly applied to the Meſſiah in the following oracles, p
portionably as the revelation increaſed, and as God unravelled the id
of theſe ancient oracles, by explaining them more particularly by th
Prophets whom he afterwards raiſed up. This may clearly be ſeen,
we paſs on to thoſe oracles which were uttered by *David*, and the ot
Prophets who lived about his time.

CHAP. X.

Of the Oracles which concern the Meſſiah in the Book of PSALMS.

THESE were the Oracles which were the ſubjects of the me
tations of the faithful from the year of the world 2553,
which *Moſes* died, until *David*'s time, who was particularly choſen
God to be the only man of *his family*, which was alſo ſeparated from
the other families of *Judah*, who came from *Pharez*, from whom
the Meſſiah was to be deſcended.

I have obſerved, in another place, that in all probability God raiſed *vid* to the throne, only to make the genealogy of that family better own, from which the Meſſiah was to ſpring.

As this double advancement of *David*, one to the throne of *Iſrael*, other to be the father to the Meſſiah, ought to have inſpired him with ely reſentments of gratitude, and as his oracles would be much more nous, being uttered by a royal Prophet, and the rather becauſe God ployed him in the making a juſt regulation of the ſervice of the ſanc- ry; ſo we ſee that *David* employed his pen in giving more diſtinct as of that Meſſiah which he promiſed them.

The name *Meſſiah* properly ſignifies a perſon conſecrated by anointing be King, Prieſt, or Prophet. This name was particularly applied *David*, and the Prophets who lived after him, to that holy ſeed which d had promiſed to *Abraham*'s family by *Iſaac*, by *Jacob*, by *Judah*, l by *David*; and one may obſerve in *David*'s *Pſalms*, and in the Pro- ets of his time, that they gave the name of Meſſiah to the promiſed d, under one or other of theſe three ſenſes.

The characters both of a Prophet and a Prieſt, though each of them auguſt enough, yet yield to that of a King. Theſe are the different as which *David*, and the Prophets of that time, followed in all the iety of their deſcriptions.

But it is not my deſign to give a particular account of all thoſe oracles ich deſcribe theſe different characters, for fear of being exceſſively g: ſo I ſhall content myſelf with obſerving two things: I. That *vid* alone uttered more oracles than all the Prophets who came before ; II. That theſe oracles of *David*, concerning the Meſſiah, are rer than all the precedent ones.

Now, I ſay, that *David* alone uttered more oracles than any one Pro- t who came before him; thus in the xlth *Pſalm* he explains the de- e by which the Meſſiah became the ſervant of God, and clothed him- with the form of a ſervant, to offer unto God a more perfect obe- nce than that which had formerly been offered by burnt-offerings and rifices. He deſcribes the meaſure and the nature of his miniſtry, ch was to conſiſt in the inſtruction of the people in righteouſneſs, h, and the ſalvation of God. *Pſalm* xl. 7.——11. *Sacrifice and ring thou didſt not deſire, mine ears haſt thou opened: burnt-offering and offering haſt thou not required. Then, ſaid I, Lo, I come; in the volume he book it is written of me. I delight to do thy will, O my God; yea, thy is within my heart. I have preached righteouſneſs in the great congre- on: lo, I have not refrained my lips, O Lord, thou knoweſt. I have not thy righteouſneſs within my heart, I have declared thy faithfulneſs and ſalvation: I have not concealed thy loving kindneſs, and thy truth, from reat congregation.*

n the xvith *Pſalm* he deſcribes the inviolable ſteadfaſtneſs of the Meſ- to the ſervice of God, who had ſent him to form a great people; n the manner of his deliverance by God from all the powers of the ld, by raiſing him up from the dead, and afterwards receiving him glory. *Pſalm* xvi. 8, &c. *I have ſet the Lord always before me: be- e he is at my right hand, I ſhall not be moved. Therefore my heart is , and my glory rejoiceth; my fleſh alſo ſhall reſt in hope. For thou wilt not*

not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thy Holy One to see corruption. Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.

In the xxiid *Psalm* he describes the agonies through which the Messiah was to pass, the manner of his death, the victory which he should obtain over his enemies, and the conversion of those very nations which had cast him off.

In the cixth *Psalm* he speaks of the oppressions of the Messiah, pronouncing great numbers of imprecations against that very person who should signalize himself by persecuting his innocence. *Hold not thy peace, O God of my praise: for the mouth of the wicked, and the mouth of the deceitful, are opened against me; they have spoken against me with a lying tongue.* Verse 1, 2. *Set thou a wicked man over him, and let Satan stand at his right hand. When he shall be judged, let him be condemned, and let his prayer become sin. Let his days be few, and let another take his office.* Verse 6, 7, 8. *Because that he remembered not to shew mercy, but persecuted the poor and needy man, that he might even slay the broken in heart. As he loved cursing, so let it come to him: as he delighted not in blessing, so let it be far from him. As he clothed himself with cursing like as with his garment, so let it come into his bowels like water, and like oil into his bones.* Verse 16, 17, 18.

In the lxixth *Psalm* he carries this argument further, in his description of the zeal of the Messiah for the house of God, and of those insultings which he should meet with, and the manner of their giving him vinegar and gall to drink, with the hardening and rejection of those who had used him in that manner. *Save me, O God, for the waters are come in unto my soul. I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing: I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me.* Verse 1, 2. *Let not them that wait on thee, O Lord God of Hosts, be ashamed for my sake: let not those that seek thee, be confounded for my sake, O God of* Israel. *Because for thy sake I have born reproach; shame hath covered my face. I am become a stranger unto my brethren, and an alien unto my mother's children: for the zeal of thy house hath eaten me up; and the reproaches of them that reproached thee, are fallen upon me.* Verse 6, 7, 8, 9. *Reproach hath broken my heart, and I am full of heaviness: and I looked for some to take pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but I found none. They gave me also gall for my meat, and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink. Let their table become a snare before them; and that which should have been for their welfare, let it become a trap. Let their eyes be darkened, that they see not; and make their loins continually to shake. Pour out thy indignation upon them, and let thy wrathful anger take hold of them.* Verse 20, 21, 22, 23, 24.

In the xcviith and xcviiith *Psalms*, he describes the destruction of idolatry when the promised Saviour should appear, and when God should raise him upon his throne. *The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice; let the multitude of the isles be glad thereof.* Psalm xcvii. 1. *Confounded be all they that serve graven images, that boast themselves of idols: worship him, all ye gods. Zion heard, and was glad, and the daughters of* Judah *rejoiced because of thy judgments, O Lord: for thou, Lord, art high above all the earth: thou art exalted far above all gods.* Verse 7, 8, 9. *O sing unto the Lord a new song, for he hath done marvellous things: his right hand, and his holy arm, have gotten him the victory. The Lord hath made known his sal-*

vation

n: his righteouſneſs hath he openly ſhewed in the ſight of the heathen. ath remembered his mercy and his truth towards the houſe of Iſrael: *all nds of the earth have ſeen the ſalvation of our God. Make a joyful noiſe the Lord all the earth: make a loud noiſe, and rejoice, and ſing praiſe.* n xcviii. 1—4.

the lxviiith *Pſalm* he explains the glory of the Meſſiah, and his ıſion into heaven, with the effuſion of thoſe gifts which he was to d abroad for the converſion of the nations, that God might dwell ngſt the moſt rebellious. *Princes ſhall come out of* Egypt, Ethiopia *ſoon ſtretch out her hands unto God. Sing unto God, ye kingdoms of the : O ſing praiſes unto the Lord. To him who rideth upon the heavens of ens, which were of old; lo, he doth ſend out his voice, and that a mighty . Aſcribe ye ſtrength unto God: his excellency is over* Iſrael, *and his gth is in the clouds. O God, thou art terrible out of thy holy places, the of* Iſrael *is he that giveth ſtrength and power unto his people.* Verſe 31, 33, 34, 35.

he Prophets who lived in the time of *David*, or ſoon after, purſued is ideas. One ſees that *Nathan*, II. *Sam.* vii. foretells *Solomon*'s y, and the honour which he ſhould have in building that temple of h *David* had formed the deſign before, in ſuch a manner, that he ly ſhews three things which will by no means agree with *Solomon*. hat God ſhould raiſe up a ſon to *David* after his death, and place upon his throne; whereas *Solomon* was born, and advanced to the ne by *David* himſelf. II. It was promiſed that this government ſhould ıdleſs: this is not applicable to the royal poſterity of *David*, who ıut twenty ſucceſſors, who bore the title of kings. III. That God cularly promiſes to be the father of this promiſed ſon, which is not applicable to *Solomon* than to *David*, to *Joſiah*, or *Hezekiah*.

ne ſees that *Corah*'s poſterity gave that account of *Solomon*'s glory his marriage with the king of *Egypt*'s daughter; he ſpeaks of a ne much more auguſt then that prince's was, and he repreſents to us d conſecrated with oil of gladneſs above his fellows. This exactly orth the auguſt character of the Meſſiah, and his anointing to be ing of all nations, their Prophet, and their Prieſt. *Pſalm* xlv. 1. *eart is inditing a good matter: I ſpeak of the things which I have made ing the king: my tongue is the pen of a ready writer.* Verſe 7, 8 *Thy , O God, is for ever and ever; the ſceptre of thy kingdom is a right e. Thou loveſt righteouſneſs, and hateſt wickedneſs; therefore God, thy hath anointed thee with oil of gladneſs above thy fellows.* Verſe 16. *In- of thy fathers ſhall be thy children, whom thou mayſt make princes in all rth.*

ne ſees the ſame Prophets inviting all nations, in the xlviith *Pſalm*, knowledge the kingdom of God; which *Daniel* afterwards de- es as that which the *Jews* already knew was to be governed by the ah.

ne ſees *Aſaph* deſcribing in the fiftieth *Pſalm* the manner of the Meſ- aſſembling all people, and of his rejecting the ancient and legal ſer- and preſcribing a ſpiritual one, even ſacrifices of vows, and of praiſe. 6, 7, 8, 9, 10. *And the heavens ſhall declare his righteouſneſs: for God ge himſelf. Hear, O my people, and I will ſpeak; O* Iſrael, *and I will*

teſtify againſt thee: I am God, even thy God. I will not reprove thee f thy ſacrifices, or thy burnt-offerings, to have been continually before me. will take no bullock out of thy houſe, nor he-goat out of thy folds. For eve beaſt of the foreſt is mine, and the cattle upon a thouſand hills.

One ſees the author of the lxxiid *Pſalm* deſcribing the glory and hap pineſs of *Solomon*'s kingdom in ſuch a manner, that he carries his view as high as the Meſſiah at the ſame time; he foretels the continuance his kingdom as long as the ſun and moon endures; that all the kings the world ſhould bring preſents to him, and that all the nations of th earth ſhould worſhip before him. Verſe 5. *They ſhall fear thee as long the ſun and moon endure, throughout all generations.* Verſe 8. *He ſhall hav dominion alſo from ſea to ſea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth* Verſe 11. *All kings ſhall fall down before him, all nations ſhall ſerve him* Verſe 17, 18, 19. *His name ſhall endure for ever; his name ſhall be con tinued as long as the ſun, and men ſhall be bleſſed in him; all nations ſhall ca him bleſſed. Bleſſed be the Lord God of* Iſrael, *who only doth wonderou things: and bleſſed be his glorious name for ever, and let the whole earth filled with all his glory; Amen and Amen.*

One ſees that *Ethan* the *Ezrahite*, who is repreſented to us as th wiſeſt man in that age after *Solomon*, explains the promiſe made to *Davi* of a ſon who ſhould reign for ever, and whoſe throne ſhould be im movable, in the lxxxixth *Pſalm*. This agrees to none but the Me ſiah, whom he deſcribes as the firſt-born of the princes of the earth and as the ſon of God, in a manner which is not applicable to any *David*'s poſterity, except only to the Meſſiah. Verſe 19, 20. *Then thou ſpakeſt in viſions to the Holy One, and ſaidſt, I have laid help upon one that mighty; I have exalted one choſen out of the people. I have found* David *my ſervant; with my holy oil have I anointed him.* Verſe 24, 25, 26, 27, 28 29. *My faithfulneſs and my mercy ſhall be with him; and in my name ſha his horn be exalted. I will ſet his hand alſo in the ſea, and his right hand the rivers. He ſhall cry unto me, Thou art my Father, my God, and th Rock of my Salvation. Alſo I will make him my firſt-born, higher than th kings of the earth. My mercy will I keep for him for evermore, and my cove nant ſhall ſtand faſt with him. His ſeed alſo will I make to endure for eve and his throne as the days of heaven.* Verſe 33, 34, 35, 36, 37. *Neverthe leſs my loving kindneſs will I not utterly take from him, nor ſuffer my faithfu neſs to fail. My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out my lips. Once have I ſworn by my holineſs, that I will not lie unto* David *His ſeed ſhall endure for ever, and his throne as the ſun before me: it ſhall eſtabliſhed for ever as the moon, and as a faithful witneſs in heaven.*

One needs only read over the *Pſalms* which I have now taken notic of, and which are almoſt all applied by the *Jews* to the Meſſiah, to ſe the great number of oracles which God gave in *David*'s time, con cerning this matter; not to ſpeak of thoſe which deſcribe the calling the *Gentiles*, which fill up the book of the *Pſalms* almoſt entirely.

I come now to the proof of the ſecond article, which is to ſhew, th the oracles which *David* uttered are much clearer, and much more par ticular, than thoſe which were given before. This I hope to prove be yond all conſideration, by conſidering two *Pſalms*, the one whereof de ſcribes the prodigious humiliation of the Meſſiah, and the other deſcribe

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advancement at the right hand of God; two of the greateſt truths ared by the Prophets, and two the moſt ſingular of all the cha- ers which belong to the *promiſed Meſſiah.*

CHAP. XI.

ſiderations upon the Sufferings of the MESSIAH, *and upon his glorious ſcenſion into Heaven, foretold by* DAVID *in the* xxiid *and* cxth PSALMS.

cannot be denied, when one reads the xxiid *Pſalm*, but that the per- ſon there ſpoken of is deſcribed figuratively, as one expoſed to the reſt ſufferings, from which he is afterwards delivered by the Divine tance, and advanced to rule an empire which extends itſelf over all nations of the world, and afterwards univerſally adored.

. He that ſpeaks, cries out as if God had forſaken him, and had ped his ears unto his cry.

I. He deſcribes himſelf as a worm, and no man, as the reproach of , and one deſpiſed by the people.

II. He takes notice, that thoſe who were witneſſes of his ſufferings, le a mock at them, bidding him truſt in God, that he might deliver .

V. He ranks his enemies amongſt the bulls of *Baſhan*, and raging s, who (according to the prophetical way of ſpeaking) are the chief in the nation. *Amos* iv. 1. *Ezek.* xxii. 25.

. He joins the dogs with them, that is, profane perſons, or the *tiles.*

VI. He repreſents his hands and his feet as pierced with nails.

VII. He ſhews that he was ſtretched out before, in ſuch a manner, they might count all his bones: this expreſſes the idea of a man ened to a croſs, and expoſed to the view of all the world; as he rwards deſcribes himſelf to be quite dried up, from the loſs of blood, en he was crucified.

VIII. He takes notice of their parting his garments, and,

X. Of their caſting lots upon his veſture.

n ſhort, one ſees, throughout all the expreſſions of this *Pſalm*, the ge of a death which was equally ſhameful and cruel.

he other part of the *Pſalm* gives us an account of the deliverance hat perſon who is mentioned in this holy hymn.

. He obliges himſelf to praiſe the name of the Lord in the moſt erous aſſembly.

. He obſerves it as an effect of this deliverance, that all the ends he world ſhould remember, and turn unto the Lord, and that all kindreds of the nations ſhould worſhip before him.

III. At laſt, he takes notice that the kingdom of God ſhould ſprea itſelf over all the nations of the world.

One may judge, by the hiſtory of *David*, whether this *Pſalm* is appli cable to him; therein we may ſee all the croſſes which he underwent particularly repreſented, during all the former years of his reign. Bu there we have no account that *David* ever ſuffered any thing like tha which is ſo exactly deſcribed in this *Pſalm*. And this may be ſaid fur ther, that when *David* took any occaſion to paint out his ſufferings t us, he has put in ſeveral ſtrokes which only relate to the Meſſiah, an which ſhew us, in a very lively manner, that he was to paſs through much greater trials than any of thoſe from which *David* had been de livered.

The later *Jews*, who endeavour to verify this prophecy in *Eſther* o *Mordecai*, agree with us at the bottom, that *David* carried his views fur ther than barely in his own ſufferings; and thoſe alſo who apply it t the people of *Iſrael*, muſt acknowledge the ſame truth, even againſ their wills.

But the more ancient *Jews* were more equitable in their application of the xxiid *Pſalm* to the Meſſiah. They applied it to him in earneſt even after the time of Jeſus Chriſt, when the compariſon of theſe cha racters of the Meſſiah, which may be found ſo exactly in the death o Jeſus Chriſt, led them to an oppoſition of this truth.

And certainly there needs very little equity to acknowledge that thi oracle, or rather this heap of oracles, belonged to the Meſſiah, by th confeſſion and agreement of the *Jews* in our Saviour's time.

I. They had not then reſolved to make their advantages of the writer' fault, who writ [כאריו] *like a lion*, inſtead of [כארו] *they have pierce* my feet, as they have done ſince. In ſhort, *Aquila*, who lived a hundre years after Jeſus Chriſt, and the other *Jewiſh* interpreters, *Symmachu* and *Theodotion*, tranſlated that paſſage as we now read *it*.

II. The notion which the Synagogue always had of the ſufferings o the Meſſiah, obliged them to ſuppoſe two Meſſiahs, one ſuffering, an the other glorious, rather than to contradict that truth openly, whic is expreſſed by theſe oracles in ſo particular a manner.

III. Nothing can be imagined to be more ridiculous, than to ſuppoſ that Jeſus Chriſt ſhould quote the firſt words of this *Pſalm* upon th croſs, thereby to engage all mankind to take notice of the accompliſh ment of this ancient oracle in all his ſufferings, if we ſuppoſe that thi *Pſalm*, even by the confeſſion of the *Jews*, had no relation to th Meſſiah.

The ſame reflexion may be made concerning the apoſtles, who hav quoted ſo many paſſages of this *Pſalm*, to prove that Jeſus Chriſt wa the Meſſiah; becauſe one may find in his death, and in the circumſtance of it, ſuch a literal and exact accompliſhment of this ancient prophecy.

But if it ſhould be objected, that, after all, this agreement of the Syna gogue can make no more than a ſtrong prejudice, this may be eaſily an ſwered, by conſidering that when the *Pſalmiſt* ſpeaks of the extent o his kingdom over the whole earth, it was that circumſtance which de termined the Synagogue in their application of this whole *Pſalm* to th Meſſiah; becauſe, as the *Jews* themſelves acknowledge, this extent o

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ire is one of thoſe characters which, according to the ancient oracles, pplicable to none but the Meſſiah. In ſhort, (becauſe it is of great ortance, I ſhall repeat it here again) common ſenſe led thoſe who ſidered theſe ancient oracles, to compare them (as naturally they ht) with thoſe that went before, and to determine the ſcope and in- of the later ones by the relation which they had to the precedent s; and there was only need of one conſiderable clauſe, to make a cer- determination after they had made ſuch a compariſon. This the *is* were certainly convinced of, when they acknowledged that the words of *David*, II. *Sam.* xxiii. 1——8. were to be applied to the ſſiah, by comparing them with *Balaam*'s oracle of the Meſſiah, *mb.* xxiv.

We may therefore take it for granted, that *David* did not abſolutely ak of himſelf in the xxiid *Pſalm*, and that he carried his views as far he Meſſiah; that he gave a great number of characters to his poſte- , whereby they might diſtinguiſh, notwithſtanding the greatneſs of ſufferings, and even the better by his very ſufferings, than which no irer marks can poſſibly be given; becauſe there is nothing more in- untary than enduring of miſeries, nor nothing which depends leſs upon choice of the perſon who is to undergo them, than the particular d of puniſhment, or than the circumſtances which muſt accompany death, when it is once left to the unjuſt power of violent enemies.

We come now to the cxth *Pſalm*, which in a very few words contains eral very important characters of the Meſſiah, which are very diſ- ctly expreſſed.

f one conſiders it exactly, it ſeems to have been compoſed after that *than* had acquainted *David* with the glory of his ſon, which God promiſed him; ſuch a ſon who ſhould build a houſe wherein God uld dwell for ever, and who ſhould ſit upon a throne which ſhould er be overturned; whereas *David* had only formed a deſign of build- a temple to the Lord.

n ſhort, one ſees that the ſpirit of prophecy had given him a view he glory of this auguſt king who ſhould be born of his ſeed, and of glory of his kingdom which ſhould never be deſtroyed. *David* ad- ces this king not only above all MEN, by calling him *his Lord*, who s himſelf a king; but alſo above the angels, by making him ſit at the nt hand of God in the kingdom of heaven. This is perſonal. He deſcribes the glory of his office, by conſidering him as a prieſt of a her order than that of *Aaron*, from whom *Melchiſedech* received tithes the perſon of *Abraham:* and, in a word, he acquaints us with the greſs of his kingdom, and the greatneſs of his victories. Let us mine all theſe characters of themſelves.

. He brings in God ſpeaking to the Meſſiah, whom he calls *his Lord: thou at my right hand, until I make thy enemies thy footſtool.* This points to us, 1. That the Meſſiah ought to be advanced to glory; 2. That d intended to ſubdue his enemies by little and little, whilſt the Meſ- ſhould be in his glory, as it was foretold in the ſecond *Pſalm.*

I. He obſerves, That the empire of the Meſſiah was to begin at *uſalem*, or *Sion*, which was then to be under the power of his ene- s.

III. He expresly points out the quick extent of the kingdom of th Messiah, with the character of those who should submit to him with out constraint or violence, which was much practised under *Moses'* Law.

IV. He positively asserts, that the Messiah should be established *Priest after the order of Melchisedech*, which would overturn the whole Levitical priesthood, which then was to have an end; yet the very same king who designed the draught of the temple which *Solomon* built some time after, undermines the foundations of this material building, and clearly supposes that the Levitical ministry, which was fixed to *Solomon's* temple, should last no longer than until the coming of the Messiah.

V. He particularly takes notice, that the Messiah should, by the Divine assistance, destroy all that should oppose his power, and should bring all things under his dominion, as a conqueror who should overturn all things with the utmost violence.

Nothing can be greater than these several oracles; nothing can be more particular than his description of the glory to which the Messiah was to be advanced after that prodigious humiliation which is described in the xxiid *Psalm*; but what can we suppose to be the reason of *David*'s speaking of the Messiah in this *Psalm?* This I am further to consider.

One may say that the *Jews* did not constantly apply these prophecies to the Messiah, before the coming of Jesus Christ, without good grounds: they could not apply them to any of *David*'s successors; none of *David*'s successors was both king and priest. *Uzziah* was the only man who dared to usurp the priesthood; and he was punished by God himself. The *Maccabees* were not of *David*'s tribe, but were *Levites*; and none of them ever went up into heaven, to sit at the right hand of God. Besides, their kingdom did not begin in *Sion*, and they never brought any other kings under their authority. They applied it therefore to the Messiah, pursuant to the maxim which they drew from a frequent meditation upon the ancient oracles, that we ought only to look for an accomplishment of those prophecies in the person of the Messiah, which they never could find to be fulfilled any where else; when, at the same time, they knew that the exactness and truth of those predictions could not be any ways contested.

In short, it plainly appears that they did unanimously apply it to the Messiah before *Jesus Christ* came into the world, from the manner of their confessing it to our Saviour, when he pressed them with the xcth *Psalm*; though they could not explain the manner how *David* should call the Messiah Lord, when they allowed him to be his son, *Matth.* xxii. 48.

One sees nothing so frequently urged by the Apostles as this cxth *Psalm*; they use it upon all occasions, to prove that Jesus Christ had the characters of the true Messiah, such as *David* had given him in the cxth *Psalm*, supposing still, as a thing beyond dispute, that *David* spoke of the Messiah in this famous prophecy.

So that, what evasions soever the *Jews* may endeavour to make use of, yet they cannot deny but that their most famous Doctors, since Jesus Christ, have upon several occasions followed the old notions of the Synagogue in this matter. One finds in their writings great numbers of

testimonies

monies which confirm this truth. I ſhall not mention them at pre- because they are well enough known, and becauſe I would make e to come to that new degree of revelations which God gave to thoſe phets who gave new characters of the Meſſiah to the *Jewiſh* nation ome ages after *David*'s time.

hey are in too great a number to be ſpoken of, one by one, and I orced to range them under certain heads; though I intend at the e time to make more particular reflexions upon ſome of thoſe which us an account of the moſt remarkable truths, and ſo by that means iſh us with the moſt ſenſible character whereby we may know more ainly the perſon whom God propoſed to his people in ſuch a manner e Saviour of *Iſrael*, and whom he had before called *the Expectation e Gentiles*.

CHAP. XII.

the MESSIAH *was to have a Forerunner, and what was to be his Character.*

WE ſhall make it manifeſt, in the ſequel of the diſcourſe, that the Meſſiah was to appear in a very deſpicable ſtate, and conſequently his appearance would be very diſtaſteful to thoſe who expected him e ſplendour of a great king and conqueror. To oppoſe this pre- eived opinion of theirs, the Divine Wiſdom thought fit to appoint to be his forerunner, who ſhould call the *Jews* to repentance, and formation of their lives, and form in them a true notion of the ſtry of the Meſſiah, as of a perſon who was to preſcribe to them of the greateſt purity and holineſs. And indeed, in examining the Scriptures, we find that the appearance of the Meſſiah was to be red in by a perſon thus diſtinguiſhed: the following prophecies are expreſs to this purpoſe.

he firſt of theſe we find in the xlth of *Iſaiah*, verſe 3, where the Pro- ſpeaks thus, before the deſtruction of the firſt temple; *The voice of that crieth in the wilderneſs, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make ſtrait e deſert a highway for our God* (*a*). The *Jews* acknowledge that this ter ſpeaks of the comfort the Meſſiah was to procure for his people, that the voice mentioned here refers to thoſe who were to declare proclaim his coming (*b*).

'e meet with a ſecond prophecy in *Malachi*, who propheſied after ebuilding of the temple, and who, having ſhut up the viſion, pre- y points at the time wherein he was to appear, viz. during the ſe- temple, chap. iii, verſe 1, 2, 3, and 4. *Behold, I will ſend my meſ- r, and he ſhall prepare the way before me: and the Lord whom ye ſeek, ſuddenly come to his temple; even the meſſenger of the covenant, whom ye delight*

(*a*) Iſai. xl. 3. (*b*) *Abenezra*.

delight in, behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of Hosts. But who may abide the day of his coming? And who shall stand, when he appeareth? For he is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers soap. And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; and he shall purify the sons of Levi, *and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness.*

The *Jews* own that these words also of *Malachi* speak of the forerunner of the Messiah (*c*).

But we ought to observe in the foregoing passages, I. That they have a manifest relation to the time of the Messiah's coming. Should the *Jews* deny this (as indeed they unanimously acknowledge it) it would be an easy matter to convince them, 1. By urging the authority of the Evangelists, who apply these very passages to the ministry of *John the Baptist*. Thus we find that St. *Matthew* and St. *Mark* make a manifest allusion to these two prophecies (*d*): *Zachary* also, the father of *John the Baptist*, applies that of *Isaiah* to his son; and his authority is the more considerable, because he was a priest. 2. By an attentive considering the passages themselves. 3. By the common consent of the *Jewish* church, who by a generally received and undoubted tradition, that *Elijah* the *Tishbite* (the *Septuagint*, in their translation of that place of *Malachi*, telling us as much) was to be the forerunner of the Messiah; and we find that, in the time of our Saviour, the multitude and his Disciples supposed the same thing: and the *Jews* at this day have the same persuasion, viz. that *Elias* is to come before the appearance of the Messiah; from which tradition of the *Jews* the *Christians* of old did, and many at this day do believe, that *Elias* shall resume the functions of his ministry before the last coming of Jesus Christ *to judge the quick and the dead*.

II. We may observe, that the character of the forerunner of the Messiah being that which the *Jews* had much in their eye, it was needful for it to be as notable and extraordinary as was that of the Prophet *Elias*, whose ministry was without dispute the most remarkable and illustrious of all the Prophets since *Moses*; which gave the Prophet *Malachi* occasion to call him *Elias*, much upon a like account as the Prophet *Ezekiel* calls the Messiah *David* (*e*).

But above all things, we must carefully observe the several marks the Prophets give us of this forerunner.

The Prophet *Isaiah* gives us these following particulars: 1. That his ministry was to be very signal, and attended with general respect and veneration; 2. That he was to preach in the wilderness; 3. That he was to call sinners to repentance; 4. That he was to confound those who were most eminent in authority, and to comfort the poor and humble; 5. That he was immediately to precede the Messiah; 6. That his ministry was to usher in that grand revelation of the glory of God in the presence of all flesh, i. e. before all nations of the earth, who were to be called by the Messiah to his religion, according to the express declaration of the Prophets.

The Prophet *Malachi* doth most distinctly represent to us, 1. That the mission of this forerunner was not far off, *Behold*, saith he, *I send my messenger*. He speaks of it as of a thing at the door. Now it is evident,

(*c*) *R. Saad.* (*d*) Matth. iii. 1. Mark i. 2.
(*e*) Ezek. xxxiv. 23, 24.

dent, and the *Jews* themselves own it, that from the time of *Malachi*, re was never a prophet, till the appearance of *John the Baptist*.

2. It tells us that this *Elias* was to call sinners to repentance, and *to pare the way before the face of the Lord.*

3. That he was immediately to precede the Messiah: this he expresses saying, *And the Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to his temple, even Angel of the covenant whom ye delight in.* It is evident that he speaks re of the Messiah, whom he calls, not only the *Angel or Messenger of covenant*, but also the *Lord* (*f*): *the Lord*, forasmuch as God had omised him as a king to the house of *David*; and *the Angel of the cove-nt*, because God by him was to make a new covenant with the nations the earth, as *Jeremy* declares, chap. xxxi.

CHAP. XIII.

at the MESSIAH *was to be born before the Dissolution of the Jewish State, and the Destruction of the Second Temple.*

THE preceding mark of the Messiah leads us to this we are now to speak of, and affords it considerable light. I will not repeat here nat I have already set down concerning that prophecy, *Gen.* xlix. rse 10. concerning the time when our Saviour was to appear in the orld. It is evident, at first sight, that that prophecy evinces three ings: 1. That the *sceptre* was to be in the house of *Judah*, before ever e *Shiloh* was to come. 2. That the *sceptre* was to give way to an in-rior dignity, which the Prophet sets forth by the word *lawgiver*; and hich did take place till the time of *Zerubbabel*, and his successors. There was a necessity that this last dignity also was to come to an d, which happened not till the advancement of *Herod* the Great to e throne of *Judea*. And it is easy to confirm this truth, by other acles which give a further light to this our explication.

We have several that are very remarkable upon this account: the first that of *Daniel*, chap. ii. verse 40, 41, 42, to 46. where he first takes otice of the succession of several monarchies, until that of the Messiah. The time in which the Messiah was to appear. I confess he does not termine the time very precisely, mentioning only the monarchy during hich he was to be manifested; but to make amends for this, when he omes to explain the particulars of this prophecy, which before he had opposed in general terms, he doth not only point at the time of his ppearance, but the very year of his death; and he does it with that actness, that it is impossible to be mistaken about it.

See what he saith in the ixth chapter of his *Revelations*, verse 24, 25, 6, 27. *Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people, and upon thy holy y, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make recon-iation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the*

(*f*) Psalm ii.

the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy. Verse 25. *Know therefore, and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and build* Jerusalem, *unto the Messiah the Prince, shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks; the streets shall be built again, and the wall even in troublous times.* Verse 26. *And after the threescore and two weeks shall* MESSIAH *be cut off, but not for himself. And the people of the Prince that shall come, shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood; and unto the end of the war desolations are determined.* Verse 27. *And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week; and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease, and for the overspreading abomination he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined, shall be poured on the desolate.*

For the understanding of this prophecy, which is so exact, and all the events it refers to so particularised, it is to be observed:

1. That by the weeks *Daniel* here speaks of, seven years are designed, according to the style of the law, *Levit.* xxv. 8. when it speaks of the year of jubilee; so that seventy weeks make out 490 years, which is acknowledged by the most learned amongst the *Jews*, *Jachiades*, *Abarbanel*, and *Manasseh Ben Israel.*

2. That the Prophet, writing in *Chaldea*, followed the account of the *Chaldean* year, which consists of 360 days, as appears clearly from other passages of this book, where he resolves the years into days, without regarding the several days which, in a just calculation, were to be intercalated.

3. That the Prophet expresses a certain *epocha* from whence the counting of these weeks is to begin, viz. an order to rebuild the temple, which cannot be applied to that of *Cyrus*, which was in a manner of none effect; nor to the edict of *Darius*, son of *Hystaspes*, which had regard only to the re-establishing of the temple; nor to that of *Artaxerxes*, given to *Ezra* in the seventh year of the reign of that prince, because that contained only some particular privileges for the ministers of the temple: but to the edict which *Artaxerxes* granted to *Nehemiah* in the twentieth year of his reign, which contains a particular grant to rebuild the temple with its fortifications.

4. That God very distinctly marks that the last week was not to be immediately joined with the sixty-nine weeks, by saying that the Messiah was to be cut off after the term of seven weeks and sixty-two weeks expired, instead of saying that he should be cut off in the seventieth week.

5. That, according to this calculation, we find these three parts of this prophecy exactly accomplished. The first, which contains their building of the city, was performed before the end of the seven weeks: the second, concerning the cutting off of the Messiah, has been likewise fulfilled after the sixty-ninth week; Jesus Christ appearing in the 483d year after the twentieth of *Artaxerxes*, and being crucified the nineteenth of *Tiberius.*

As for the last week, it is distinguished by three characters God hath given it, because it was to be separated from the sixty-ninth week by a considerable interval, but yet was never a whit the less exactly accomplished. The first character is, that the people of the prince was to make

peace

ace with many, which agrees with the peace the *Romans* made with e *Parthians*, of which *Tacitus* makes mention, *Annal. lib.* 15. which ace was concluded juſt ſeven years before the deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*; e ſecond is, the ceaſing of the daily ſacrifice, which happened three ars and a half after the peace made with the *Parthians*, as *Joſephus* th obſerved; the third is, the deſtruction of the *Jews*, which arrived actly three years and a half after the ceaſing of the daily ſacrifice, and en years after the ſaid peace made with the *Parthians*.

I know that ſome famous men begin the weeks of *Daniel* from the cond year of *Darius Nothus*, and make them to end with the deſtruc- on of the *Jews*, which happened in the year 490, accounting from the cond year of the ſaid *Darius*; and they conceive themſelves obliged ereto, by an argument they believe invincible, becauſe, from the ſe- nd year of *Darius Nothus* to the thirty-ſecond of *Artaxerxes Mnemon*, ey find juſt forty-nine years, that is, the ſeven weeks deſigned by *Daniel* r rebuilding of the ruins, and fortifying of the city; and the rather, cauſe *Nehemiah* returned to *Artaxerxes* in the thirty-ſecond year of his ign, having finiſhed that work, *Nehemiah* xiii. 6.

But this opinion cannot ſtand, for two reaſons, which ſeem to be de- ſive: the firſt is, becauſe they join that which God hath ſeparated, viz. e death of the Meſſiah with the laſt week, which ends at the deſtruction *Jeruſalem*; the ſecond is, that without thinking of it they deprive ſus Chriſt of the glory of having determined the time of the deſtruc- on of the *Jews*, as if, inſtead of a prophecy about this event, Jeſus hriſt had only given the world an explication of a former prophecy.

Now theſe obſervations being ſuppoſed, as indeed they are matters of e greateſt evidence, it neceſſarily follows, that the Meſſiah was to pear before the deſtruction of *Jeruſalem* by the *Romans*. The ſame is t down ſo preciſely by *Daniel*, as leaves no pretence to doubt of this uth. And indeed, though the *Jews* ſeem, after the time of our Saviour, have adopted the opinion I mentioned before, and therefore carried the pearing of the Meſſiah to the end of the ſeventy weeks, viz. to the ſtruction of their temple, notwithſtanding *Daniel* expreſsly tells us at the *Jews* were not to be deſtroyed till after the cutting off of the eſſiah; the *Jews* I ſay, being convinced by the force of this argument, ve owned that the Meſſiah was born about the time of the deſtruction the ſecond temple, but that he had hid himſelf ever ſince.

The ſecond oracle, concerning the time of the coming of the Meſſiah, that of *Haggai*, which expreſsly tells us, that the Meſſiah was to pear during the ſecond temple, which was begun to be built by the der of *Cyrus*, finiſhed under *Darius* ſon of *Hyſtaſpes*, and deſtroyed by *ſpaſian*. The words of the Prophet are as follows, chap. ii. ver. 7, 9. *And I will ſhake all nations, and the deſire of all nations ſhall come; d I will fill this houſe with glory, ſaith the Lord of Hoſts. The ſilver is ine, and the gold is mine, ſaith the Lord of Hoſts. The glory of this latter uſe ſhall be greater than that of the former, ſaith the Lord of Hoſts: and in is place will I give peace, ſaith the Lord of Hoſts.* It is worth our noting,

That this oracle promiſes a very great change. 2. It deſcribes the eſſiah as the expectation of the *Gentiles*, ſuitable to the idea God had ven of him to *Abraham*. 3. That it fixes the coming of the Meſſiah

to

to the time of the second house, that is to say, of the temple built by *Zorobabel*. 4. It makes the glory of that house to depend upon its being honoured with the presence of the Messiah.

In short, if we would be convinced of this truth, we need only consider three things. The first is, that the Prophets *Zechariah* and *Malachi* do represent to us the coming of the Messiah as near at hand: *Balaam* had said, almost ten ages before, *I see him, but not nigh*; which intimated his coming to be then at a great distance. But *Zechariah* speaks thus concerning it, chap. iii. vers. 8, 9, 10. *Hear now, O* Joshua *the high priest, thou and thy fellows that sit before thee, for they are men wondered at: behold, I will bring forth my servant the* BRANCH; *for behold, the stone that I have laid before* Joshua; *upon one stone shall be seven eyes; behold, I will engrave the graving thereof, saith the Lord of Hosts, and I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day. In that day, saith the Lord of Hosts, shall ye call every man his neighbour, under the vine and under the fig-tree.*

Malachi expresses himself, concerning the approaching coming of the Messiah, thus: (chap. iii. vers. 1.) *Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me; and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple; even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in, behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of Hosts.*

One ought to observe two very considerable things in this prophecy: the first, that the Messiah was to come suddenly; the second, that *Malachi* expressly points to us, that the appearing of the Messiah was to be during the second temple; the words of the prophecy distinctly expressing it.

And sure it is, that all who gave any credit to these oracles, did understand them so.

The first, both *Jews* and *Gentiles* looked for the Messiah during the second temple. We find a passage express to the purpose in *Tacitus*; and it was on this ground that *Josephus* gave the title of *Messiah* to *Vespasian*.

2. They expected him at the end of the seventy weeks, which was the third year after the death of Jesus Christ. This was the occasion of their being deluded by so many false Messiahs, about the time of our Saviour, and a little after.

3. They never despaired of his coming (taking the promise of the Messiah's coming to be conditional, whenas indeed it was absolute) until they began to believe that the term set down by God himself was expired.

4. The reason of their cursing those that compute the times set down so distinctly and precisely by *Daniel*, was, because they found themselves disappointed in his calculation, finding that the time which *Daniel* had pointed at for the coming of the Messiah, seemed to be already expired.

5. It is but of late that they have tried to evade it, by maintaining that the temple will be built a third time, and that then the Messiah shall appear; but this evasion is unanswerably refuted: 1. Because *Daniel* assigns a certain term which is expired 1600 years since; 2. Because he expressly tells us, that the desolation of the temple was to be for ever,

as

ill appear in the following chapters; and 3dly, becauſe *Haggai* in t calls the temple of which he ſpeaks, *The ſecond or third houſe*; by h expreſſion he ſo diſtinctly points out the ſecond temple to us, that ould be ridiculous to ſuppoſe it meant of a third temple, to be built o years after the ruin of that of which he propheſied.

CHAP. XIV.

the Meſſiah was to be born of a Virgin of the Houſe of DAVID.

HITHERTO we have ſeen that the Meſſiah was to be born of the poſterity of *Abraham* by *Iſaac*, of that of *Iſaac* by *Jacob*, and of of *Jacob* by *Judah*. This hath been ſufficiently made out already. have alſo ſhewed from the oracle in the I. *Sam.* chap. vii. that he to be born of the poſterity of *David*; and we find the ſame very icularly and fully ſet down in the lxxxixth *Pſalm*.

he following prophets have expreſſed themſelves to the ſame purpoſe; *ah* xi. verſ. 1, 2 3. and the prophet *Jeremy* hath purſued the ſame s, chap. xxiii. verſ. 5, 6. and chap. xxxiii. verſ. 15, 16, 17.

Neither do the prophets only diſtinguiſh the Meſſiah by his being born virgin, but alſo by determining that virgin to the houſe of *David*. ther need I repeat here what I have already obſerved, that this is a h, the grounds whereof God had laid down in his firſt promiſe, viz. *ſeed of the woman ſhall bruiſe the ſerpent's head*: where he makes men- of the ſeed of the woman only, without naming that of the man, word of *ſeed* or *poſterity* very evidently deſigning a man to be born of woman, which is acknowledged by the *Jews* in another prophecy, the ſame which the Apoſtle St. *Paul* (*e*) takes notice of as a maxim erally owned by the doctors of the ſynagogue. It is alſo evident the word *woman* plainly denotes the ſex of which this perſon was ediately to be born.

t was obvious to judge, that ſomething miraculous was to attend the h of the Meſſiah. We ſee *Iſaac* born of a barren mother, paſt the of child-bearing; we find alſo ſomething very ſingular at the birth *Sampſon* and *Samuel*: and it is well known that the promiſe of the ſſiah was ſomething far greater than the birth of theſe now mentioned, r illuſtrious ſoever they might be; and that therefore probably his h was to be attended by a greater miracle. But becauſe this was a g wholly new, we ought to obſerve in what manner God did parti- rly foretell it.

he prophecy of *Iſaiah* expreſſeth it thus, chap. vii. verſ. 10, 11, 12, 14, 15, 16, 17. *Moreover the Lord ſpake again unto* Ahaz, *ſaying, Aſk a ſign of the Lord thy God, aſk it either in the depth, or in the height above*

(*e*) Galat. iii.

above. But Ahaz *ſaid, I will not aſk, neither will I tempt the Lord. And he ſaid, Hear ye now, O houſe of* David, *is it a ſmall thing for you to weary men, but will ye weary my God alſo? Therefore the Lord himſelf ſhall give you a ſign; behold, a virgin ſhall conceive and bear a ſon, and ſhall call his name* Immanuel. *Butter and honey ſhall he eat, that he may know to refuſe the evil, and chooſe the good: for before the child ſhall know to refuſe the evil, and chooſe the good, the land that thou abhorreſt ſhall be forſaken of both her kings. The Lord ſhall bring upon thee, upon thy people, and upon thy father's houſe, days that have not come, from the day that* Ephraim *departed from* Judah, *even the king of* Aſſyria. Where we may obſerve,

1. That the promiſe here is made to a wicked king, but of the family of *David*, to whom the prophet particularly addreſſes himſelf.

2. That this prophecy was given at a juncture of time very capable of awakening their attention to it, at a time when the ſtate of the *Jews* was reduced to the greateſt extremity, and the houſe of *David* in particular in a very great conſternation.

3. The prophecy was uttered by a very illuſtrious prophet, who was of the royal family.

4. It was ſealed and confirmed with the prediction of the birth of a child, which came to paſs accordingly.

5. It is ſet forth as a very extraordinary ſign, inſtead of that which the wicked king refuſed to aſk, when *Iſaiah* offered it him, in the name of God.

I am not ignorant that the modern *Jews* deny that this character of being born of a virgin belongs to the Meſſiah: but it is an eaſy matter to confute them.

For, firſt, would it not have been ridiculous for the apoſtles to go about to apply this oracle to their Meſſiah, if it had not been a thing univerſally owned by the *Jews*, that this was the meaning of *Iſaiah*'s prophecy? Is it not evident that this character, ſo difficult to gain belief, would rather perplex than ſtrengthen their proofs? And yet certain it is that St. *Matthew* has done ſo, chap. i. verſ. 23; as likewiſe St. *Luke*, chap. i. verſe 31.

Juſtin Martyr obſerved, that the notion of this oracle, as we underſtand it, hath been entertained amongſt the heathens, who built their fable of *Perſeus* upon it, whom they pretend to have been born of a virgin.

3. It appears that all thoſe laws which I mentioned in my reflexions upon *Exodus*, and the following books, chap. xx. and which have relation to the diſtinct knowledge of the ſtate of virginity, receive much light from this notion; and are, without it, altogether uſeleſs.

4. It is evident that the *Jews* did not diſpute this character, till after they ſaw that the Chriſtians applied it to Jeſus Chriſt; and thereupon have fallen upon ſuch childiſh fancies as may juſtly cover them with confuſion.

But we ſhall be yet further ſatisfied hereof, if we add to all theſe juſt prejudices, only the following reflexions on the terms the prophet makes uſe of.

The firſt is, that the ſeventy interpreters have, in tranſlating this prophecy,

ecy, made use of a word that signifies a virgin, and not a young wo-n, as the *Jews* have understood it since our Saviour's time. The first o rejected the interpretation of the *Septuagint* was *Simmachus* (*f*), o lived in the second century, as it is observed by *Justin Martyr* and *rtullian*, who for this reason accuse the *Jews* of having falsified the ly scripture.

The second is, That the *Hebrew* word expressly signifies such an one according to the law of virgins, was kept under lock and key from the s of men, according to the custom of the eastern nations, and espe-lly of the *Jews*, which continues amongst them till this day.

The third is, That this word hath been taken by the *Africans* in the ne signification, as St. *Jerome* observes.

The fourth is, That the prophet doth set forth this child-bearing as rodigy and miracle altogether unheard-of, and as a particular cha-ter, by which the house of *David* was to be strongly confirmed in the pe of seeing the accomplishment of the promise which God had made settling an eternal kingdom upon it, which could not be accomplished t by means of the Messiah.

The fifth is, That though some *Jews* have applied this prophecy to g *Hezekiah* (*g*); which yet to others of them seems very ridiculous, being nine years of age when the prophecy was uttered by *Isaiah*, and emselves never making use of this evasion, except in their disputes ainst the Christians, and so on this occasion have dropped a confes-n which alone was sufficient to confound them; yet it hath been a ng so generally received amongst them, that this prophecy did respect e Messiah, that, after they had applied it to *Hezekiah*, one of their most nous doctors concludes (*h*), that they ought to look for no Messiah, ce the time of *Hezekiah*, that prophecy having had its accomplish-nt in him; an opinion which those that succeeded him have rejected th the greatest abhorrence.

The sixth is, That the title of *Immanuel*, given to this son, whose th is here promised, is represented to us, chap. viii. as the name of n who was lord of the land; which is a true representation of the heir omised to *David*, to whom *David* said, *O God, thy God hath anointed e with the oil of gladness above thy fellows*. *Psalm* xlv. 7, 8.

The seventh is, That the prophet *Isaiah* having alledged and cited o witnesses, *Uriah*, the son of *Shemaiah*, a prophet, who was put to ath by *Jehoiakim*, and *Zechariah* the son of *Jeberechiah*; the former of ich lived long after *Ahaz*, and the latter since the captivity, under rius king of *Persia*, according to the account the *Jews* themselves e of them; he sufficiently hints, by this circumstance, that the pro-ecy concerning the birth of the *Immanuel* he speaks of, was to be ful-ed many ages after, and not in that age wherein he prophesies.

(*f*) In Dialog. cum *Tryphon. Tertull.* cont. *Jud.* cap. 9.
(*g*) *Raschi* in h. l.
(*h*) *Gemar* in *Sanhed.* Cap. Chelech.

CHAP. XV.

That the MESSIAH *was to be born at* Bethlehem *of the Family of* David, *which at that Time was reduced to a private State.*

GOD had not only pointed out the time in which the Meſſiah was to appear, with the miraculous manner and circumſtances of his birth; but he had alſo named the family, the place, with the ſtate and condition of the family in which he was to be born, as a triple character by which he might be known.

I ſay, firſt, That according to the Divine oracles, the Meſſiah was to be born of the family of *David*, as will appear if we conſider the following oracles.

1. God expreſsly promiſeth as much to *David*, II. *Sam.* chap. vii. a place I have quoted before, which proves that the Meſſiah was to be born of the family of *David*.

2. It appeareth that *David* believed this himſelf, from *Pſalm* cxxxii. verſe 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, and 18. *The Lord hath ſworn in truth unto* David; *he will not turn from it*; *Of the fruit of thy body will I ſet upon thy throne.* And after having ſaid, verſe 12. *That if his children would keep his covenant*, that *their children alſo ſhould ſit upon his throne for evermore*; and this, *becauſe* (verſe 13 and 14) *the Lord had choſen* Zion, *and deſired it for his habitation, &c.* and promiſed, verſe 15, that he would *abundantly bleſs her proviſion, and ſatisfy her poor with bread*; that he would, verſe 16, *clothe her prieſts with ſalvation, and make her ſaints ſhout for joy*; he ſubjoins, verſe 17 and 18, *There I will make the horn of* David *to bud*; *I have ordained a lamp for mine anointed. His enemies I will clothe with ſhame*; *but upon himſelf ſhall his crown flouriſh.* It is very evident, that by this *horn of* David is to be meant a king, the Meſſiah, whom he diſtinguiſhes by that expreſſion from all the reſt of *David*'s children. And *Zachariah*, in his ſong of praiſe, *Luke* i. verſe 69. applying it to our Saviour, puts the matter out of all doubt.

3. Hence it was the Prophets took occaſion to give the Meſſiah the name of *David*. So *Ezek.* xxxiv. verſe 23, 24. *And I will ſet up one ſhepherd over them, and he ſhall feed them, even my ſervant* David; *he ſhall feed them, and he ſhall be their ſhepherd. And I the Lord will be their God, and my ſervant* David *a prince among them: I the Lord have ſpoken it.*

4. The *Jews* are, and have always been, firm in this perſuaſion, grounded on the foreſaid and other like places of Scripture, which they conſtantly refer to the Meſſiah.

I ſay, in the ſecond place, That the Divine oracles expreſsly point out *Bethlehem* for the birth-place of the Meſſiah. *Micah*, chap. v. verſe 2. *But thou*, Bethlehem Ephratah, *though thou be little among the thouſands of* Judah, *yet out of thee ſhall he come forth unto me, that is to be ruler in* Iſrael; *whoſe goings forth have been from of old, from the days of eternity.*

The *Jews* acknowledge that this oracle ſpeaks of the Meſſiah; and indeed the Prophet, diſtinguiſhing by *Bethlehem*, adding the word *Ephratah* (whence the family of *David* was), from that *Bethlehem* which belonged

to

another tribe, makes it apparent that nothing could be ſpoken more ſtinctly to determine the birth-place of the Meſſiah. Beſides, we find at all the *Jewiſh* Rabbies and Prieſts agree in this, That the Meſſiah as to be born at *Bethlehem*, when, being conſulted by *Herod* about this atter, they declared this to be their ſenſe, grounded upon the fore-entioned place of *Micah*, *Matthew* ii. verſe 4, 5, 6.

In the third place, it appears that the Meſſiah was to be born in an bject, contemptible, and weak condition, and very different from the reatneſs of the kings of *Judah*. Indeed, ſhould we only have our eye II. *Sam.* chap. vii. and *Pſalm* cxxxii. it would be natural enough to ink the contrary: but *Micah*'s oracle ſufficiently refutes them; for w great things ſoever the Prophet there ſpeaks of the Meſſiah, whether to his divine nature, by declaring that his *goings forth were from the ys of eternity*, or to the majeſty and glory of his empire, yet however gives us a different idea, inducing us to conceive of him, as of one at was to be born in the ſtate of a private perſon; for why elſe is his rth determined, not to *Zion*, which was the place and ſeat of the em-re of *Judah*, but to *Bethlehem*, a town where the family of *David* lived, hilſt they were private perſons, except for this cauſe, to make us con-ive that the Meſſiah was not to be born in that place where the family *David* poſſeſſed the empire, but in a condition far diſtant from the ory of kings, and in a place where the houſe of David was contemti-e, and of very ſmall eſteem?

The ſame is hinted to us by *Iſaiah*, in his xith chapter, v. 1. where he lls the Meſſiah *a rod*, or ſhoot *of the ſtem of* Jeſſe. Now *Jeſſe* was not ng, but a private perſon. And on the ſame account it is that the Pro-et deſcribes him, chap. liii. as having *no form or comelineſs*.

The Prophet *Zachary* alſo, chap. ix. verſe 9. repreſents him, not as ing ſitting on the throne in *Zion*, but as riding to *Jeruſalem* on an aſs; d he gives him the title of *Lowly*, which ſignifies as well a mean con-ion, as the virtue of humility.

But, in ſhort, this is very conſiderable: 1. That thoſe who acknow-ged Jeſus to be the Meſſiah, thought they had the greateſt reaſon ſo to , becauſe they acknowledged him to be the ſon of *David:*

2. That thoſe who denied him that title, thought themſelves ſuffi-ntly juſtified in ſo doing, by eſteeming him a *Nazarene*; as concluding could not be the ſon of *David*, if he were born at *Nazareth*, as they poſed.

3. The Evangeliſts preciſely tell us, that Chriſt was born at *Beth-m*, of the lineage of *David*, reduced to a very obſcure condition; and making this one of the chief characters which ſpoke him to be the ſſiah.

CHAP. XVI.

That the MESSIAH *was to work great Miracles, for the eſtabliſhing of his Miſſion, and of the Truth of his Doctrine.*

HERE is another character which is very particular, and whereby the Meſſiah might be certainly known, viz. That he was to work great miracles for the confirmation of his miſſion and of his doctrine.

This appears, as I have already hinted, 1. From the conformity which the Meſſiah was to have with *Moſes*, in being the founder of a new religious ſociety, and in propoſing a new doctrine to men; upon which account there lay upon him the ſame obligation as upon *Moſes*, to ſupport his authority by miracles, that even in this he might not be inferior to him.

2. One may gather this alſo from the title of *Prophet*, and *great Prophet*, which are applicable to the Meſſiah; it being difficult to conceive, that God, who vouchſafed the glory of doing miracles to moſt of the Prophets, though they were barely ſent to foretel the coming of the Meſſiah, and to give an account of him, ſhould have denied the ſame glory and the ſame power to the Meſſiah himſelf, of whom all the Prophets were but the forerunners.

Beſides, it is eaſy to judge, from the mean and contemptible ſtate wherein the Meſſiah was to appear, that this glory of doing miracles was of abſolute neceſſity, to give him authority and reſpect; for, ſince he was to be born in an obſcure condition, and not in royal grandeur, it is evident that the gift of miracles was needful to make him known, and counterbalance that low and opprobrious condition in which he was to appear in the world.

But this particularly appears from an expreſs oracle which God gave upon this very ſubject, in *Iſaiah* xxxv. verſ. 3, 4, 5, and 6. *Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees. Say to them of a fearful heart, Be ſtrong, fear not; behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompenſe; he will come and ſave you. Then the eyes of the blind ſhall be opened, and the ears of the deaf ſhall be unſtopped. Then ſhall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb ſing: for in the wilderneſs ſhall waters break out, and ſtreams in the deſert.* Which oracle very fully expreſſes the power of Miracles wherewith our Saviour was to be dignified, in curing all manner of diſeaſes, of which the Prophet hath named ſome only, to give us a *ſpecimen* of the reſt; and it ſeems as if the Prophet had choſen theſe four ſorts before all others, becauſe throughout the whole Scripture we do not find that ever any Prophet did the like, that ſo the character of the Meſſiah might be particular in his miracles too.

It is alſo worth our noting, in giving a character of the Meſſiah, firſt That even thoſe who rejected Jeſus Chriſt, yet did at the ſame time ſuppoſe that the Meſſiah, when he came, was to work miracles. Therefore it is that we hear ſome of them ſaying to Chriſt, *What ſign doſt thou*

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nd others maintaining that *Moſes* had wrought greater wonders than eſus Chriſt, in giving them bread from heaven, and feeding them miaculouſly for the ſpace of forty years; whilſt others affirmed, that none ould work greater wonders than he wrought: *When the Meſſiah ſhall ome, will he do greater wonders than this man?*

Secondly, one ought to obſerve that Jeſus Chriſt alledges this oracle f the Prophet *Iſaiah*, taking it for granted that the accompliſhment hereof was moſt viſibly evident in the miracles which he wrought, as ppears from the anſwer he gave to the meſſengers of *John the Baptiſt*.

Thirdly, it is alſo obſervable, That thoſe who were willing to flatter he vanity of the emperor *Veſpaſian* (whom *Joſephus* endeavoured to raiſe o a belief that he was the Meſſiah, becauſe he had been proclaimed in he eaſt, applying to that purpoſe the words of *Micah*, miſapplied, chap. . verſe 2. *Whoſe goings forth are from the caſt*) were not wanting to atribute to him the glory of doing miracles, and ſuch as *Iſaiah* aſcribes o the Meſſiah, by attributing to him the cure of one that was blind, nd another that was lame at *Alexandria*. He that would know the pariculars, may conſult *Tacitus*'s hiſtory.

And, laſt of all, we ought to obſerve, That the *Jews* do not only gree that this oracle of *Iſaiah* refers to the Meſſiah; but they alſo ſtill ropoſe the power of working miracles, as a character which would ender the Meſſiah very illuſtrious, and certainly known.

CHAP. XVII.

That the MESSIAH *was to be an illuſtrious Prophet.*

THIS truth I have already aſſerted in the Reflexions I made on the prophecy of *Moſes*, *Deut.* xviii. But one ought to explain his character of the Meſſiah more particularly, God having been pleaſed further to illuſtrate this oracle of *Moſes*.

Firſt, then, we ſay that the word Meſſiah implies anointing, which was common to kings, prophets, and prieſts; and ſince *David*'s time, ve find nothing more common than this title in the books of the *Old Teſtament*: where we may obſerve that *Moſes* was dignified with this gift of prophecy; and that *Samuel* communicated the ſame to *Saul* and *David*, when he anointed them to be kings. Yea, the *Jews* to this day re of opinion, that *Elias* the Prophet ſhall anoint the Meſſiah; that is, nitiate him in his prophetical, as well as his royal function.

Secondly, God more preciſely ſignifies this, *Iſai.* xi. verſ. 1, 2, and 3. where he declares he would communicate all the neceſſary gifts of the prophetical function to the Meſſiah. *There ſhall come forth a rod out of he ſtem of* Jeſſe, *and a branch ſhall grow out of his roots. And the ſpirit f the Lord ſhall reſt upon him, the ſpirit of wiſdom and underſtanding, the ſpirit of counſel and might, the ſpirit of knowledge, and of the fear of the Lord.*

that he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears.

These words need no commentary; for the *Jews* refer them constantly to the Messiah; and they plainly import that he was to be a great Prophet, forasmuch as all the *characters* which are there given to the spirit which was to rest on the Messiah, are the same which in the *Old Testament* we find attributed to the Prophets, and may easily be taken notice of in in the history of the Prophets, especially of *David* and *Solomon*.

And much to the same purpose is that passage, *Isai.* xlii. verse 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7. *Behold my Servant whom I uphold, mine Elect in whom my soul delighteth: I have put my spirit upon him; he shall bring forth judgment to the* Gentiles. *He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smocking flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgment unto truth. He shall not fail, nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth; and the isles shall wait for his law. Thus saith God the Lord, he that created the heavens, and stretched them out; he that spread forth the earth, and that which cometh out of it; he that giveth breath to the people upon it, and spirit to them that walk therein: I the Lord have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the* Gentiles; *to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison-house.* In which oracle one ought to take notice particularly of those things which the *Jews* apply to the Messiah.

1. That God proposes the gifts of the spirit, which he bestowed upon him as an effect of his love, and the choice he had made of him.

2. That the Messiah was to make use of the same, as rules for reforming the country, and propounding God's covenant to the *Gentiles*; which clearly suppose the necessity of the gift of prophecy to qualify him for such great undertakings.

3. That, contrary to the thundering character which distinguished the rest of the Prophets, who were as so many public censors, the Messiah was to speak with all meekness and sweetness to the nations which should receive his preaching.

One sees that *Isaiah* repeats the same ideas, chap. lxi. verse 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7. *The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek: he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; to appoint unto them that mourn in* Zion, *to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified. And they shall build the old wastes, they shall raise up the former desolations, and they shall repair the waste cities, the desolations of many generations. And strangers shall stand and feed your flocks; and the sons of the alien shall be your ploughmen, and your vine dressers. But ye shall be named the Priests of the Lord; men shall call you the Ministers of our God: ye shall eat the riches of the* Gentiles, *and in their glory shall ye boast yourselves. For your shame ye shall have double, and for confusion they shall rejoice in their portion:*

rtion: therefore in their land they ſhall poſſeſs the double; everlaſting joy all be upon them.

In ſhort, he repreſents, in this and the former oracle, the *Gentiles* as a eople being in darkneſs, and in the miſery of a priſon; from whence e may eaſily infer, firſt, That the Meſſiah was to be a Prophet, how le and abject ſoever that character may appear in the eyes of the orld, as I have ſhewed that it was, where I ſpake of the Prophets in eneral; ſecondly, That he was to diſcharge theſe functions during the hole courſe of his life, and that it was to be his chief employment here pon earth.

David had before ſignified, *Pſalm* xxii. verſe 22. that the Meſſiah as to *declare the name of God unto his brethren*, viz. the *Jews*, by exerſing his prophetical function in *Judea*; but the Holy Spirit did ſomeing more, when he ſeemed to point out *Galilee* as the place where this cred Doctor was chiefly to fix his abode.

This is in effect inſinuated, when God tells us that he was to begin is miniſterial functions in the tribes of *Naphtali* and *Zebulon*. *Iſai.* ix. erſe 1, 2, and 3. *Nevertheleſs the dimneſs ſhall not be ſuch as was in her exation, when at the firſt he lightly afflicted the land of* Zebulon, *and the nd of* Naphtali, *and afterwards did more grievouſly afflict her by the way of e ſea, beyond* Jordan *in* Galilee *of the nations. The people that walked in arkneſs have ſeen a great light; they that dwell in the land of the ſhadow of eath, upon them hath the light ſhined. Thou haſt multiplied the nation, thou aſt increaſed the joy: they joy before thee according to the joy in harveſt, and s men rejoice when they divide the ſpoil.*

I ſhall afterwards take notice, That the time of the Meſſiah was to e diſtinguiſhed by an incredible abundance of ſpiritual gifts: and ſo his ſhall ſuffice at preſent to prove that the Meſſiah was to be a very reat Prophet.

CHAP. XVIII.

hat the MESSIAH *was to propound a new Covenant from God with all Men.*

THIS is a truth which is eaſily gathered: 1. Becauſe all nations, before they could be made partakers of the bleſſing of God by he Meſſiah (according to the promiſe made to *Abraham*), were firſt to e received into the covenant; 2. From the nature of that covenant ſelf, of which *Moſes* was the mediator, the end of which was, to ſearate the *Jews* from other nations, ſome of which were not capable of eing received amongſt them, till after ſeveral generations, whereas they ere to be made partakers of this bleſſing by the Meſſiah; 3. Becauſe effect all the ceremonial law was only added to the moral, as it ere, contrary to God's principal intention, and only upon occaſion of

the *Jews* worshipping the *golden calf*, as St. *Paul* observes in the third chapter of his epistle to the *Galatians* (*i*).

Besides, it appears that God at divers times had given sufficient hints concerning this.

1. He had proposed a new priesthood of the Messiah, which was to abolish the Levitical priesthood; and this is the more remarkable, forasmuch as *David*, who pronounced that oracle, *Psalm* cx. was he who first formed the design of building the temple, to which all the Levitical service was annexed.

2. We find him rejecting in some sort the Levitical ministry, after he had despised it in comparison of the spiritual worship. *Psalm* xl. verse 6. *Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire; mine ears hast thou opened: burnt-offering and sin-offering hast thou not required.* And *Psalm* l. verse 8, 9, 10. *I will not reprove thee for thy sacrifices or thy burnt-offerings, which have been continually before me. I will take no bullocks out of thine house, nor he-goats out of thy folds; for every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills.* And *Psalm* li. verse 17. he tells us that *the sacrifices of God are a broken spirit*; in opposition to the sacrifices which the law prescribed, and to signify their imperfection; the law having appointed none for the expiation of murder or adultery.

Isaiah follows *David*, chap. i. verse 11, 12, 13, 14, and 15. *To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the Lord. I am full of the burnt-offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts: and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he-goats. When you come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hands to tread my courts? Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me: the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting. Your new moons, and your appointed feasts, my soul hateth: they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear them. And when you spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you; yea, when you make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood.* And *Jeremiah* speaks much to the same purpose, chap. vii. verse 21, 22, and 23.

But besides, God directly promiseth this new covenant by *Isaiah*, chap. xlii. verse 6, 7. *I the Lord have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the* Gentiles; *to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness from the prison-house.*

It is natural to observe, that in this place, where God speaks of the Messiah, as the *Jews* themselves confess, he expressly declares two things: 1. That the Messiah should be a covenant of the people, that is, that he should mediate a covenant between God and the people; 2. That the fruit of this covenant was to extend to the *Gentiles*, which plainly implies that it was not the old covenant, forasmuch as from it several were excluded.

The same covenant is also mentioned, chap. xlix. verse 8, 9. *Thus saith the Lord, In an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in a day of salvation have I helped thee: and I will preserve thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, to establish the earth, to cause to inherit the desolate heritages. That thou mayst say to the prisoners, Go forth; to them that are in darkness,*

(*i*) Gal. iii. 19.

rkneſs, Shew yourſelves. They ſhall feed in the ways, and their paſtures ſhall in all high places.

He purſues the ſame notion, chap. lv. verſ. 3, 4. *Incline your ear, nd come unto me; hear, and your ſoul ſhall live; and I will make an ever-ſting covenant with you, the ſure mercies of* David. *Behold, I have given m for a witneſs to the people, a leader and commander to the people.* Than hich, nothing can be more particular.

And to the ſame purpoſe he ſpeaks, chap. lxi. verſ. 8, 9. *For I the ord love judgment, I hate robbery for burnt-offering; and I will direct heir work in truth, and I will make an everlaſting covenant with them. And eir ſeed ſhall be known among the* Gentiles, *and their offspring among the eople; all that ſee them ſhall acknowledge them, that they are the ſeed which he Lord hath bleſſed.*

It is as clear as the day, that God in theſe oracles promiſeth an irre-ocable covenant, becauſe he calls it an *everlaſting covenant* in oppoſition o the former. He takes notice alſo in the ſame book, that the ſaid ovenant was to be propounded in the midſt of the nations, and that hen that bleſſing of God ſhould be known according to the ancient racles, which was promiſed univerſally to all nations.

This is that which God more particularly explains afterwards, by the oice and pen of a Prophet who was of the order of Prieſts, thereby to revent all ſorts of exceptions.

Jeremiah in effect ſpeaks to the ſame purpoſe, chap. xxxi. verſ. 31, 2, 33, 34, 35, and 36. *Behold, the day is come, ſaith the Lord, that I will ake a new covenant with the houſe of* Iſrael, *and with the houſe of* Judah: *ot according to the covenant that I made with their fathers, in the day that I ook them by the hand to bring them out of the land of* Egypt (*which my co-enant they break, although I were a huſband to them, ſaith the Lord*); *but his ſhall be the covenant that I will make with the houſe of* Iſrael: *After thoſe lays, ſaith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it n their heart; and I will be their God, and they ſhall be my people. And they hall teach no more every man his neighbour, ſaying, Know the Lord; for they hall all know me, from the leaſt of them unto the greateſt of them, ſaith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their ſin no more. Thus ſaith the Lord, which giveth the ſun for a light by day, and the rdinances of the moon and ſtars for a light by night, which divideth the ſea when the waves thereof roar; the Lord of Hoſts is his name. If thoſe ordi-nances depart from before me, ſaith the Lord, then the ſeed of* Iſrael *alſo ſhall ceaſe from being a nation before me for ever.*

Nothing can be deſired more particular than this oracle. 1. It tells us hat God would make a new covenant with his people, which ſuppoſes n aboliſhing of the former; 2. That this covenant was not to be like he foregoing; 3. That the old covenant had been made vain, and had been broken by thoſe with whom it was made; 4. That this covenant was to be made *after thoſe days*, that is, in the time of the Meſſiah; 5. That this new covenant was not to be engraven in tables of ſtone, but n their hearts; 6. That in the ſame covenant full remiſſion of ſin is promiſed.

The ſame thing is alſo expreſſed, chap. xxxii. verſe 40. *And I will make an everlaſting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them*

to

to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, and they shall not de part from me. And, chap. i. v. 5. *They shall ask the way to* Zion, *with their faces thitherward, saying, Come, and let us join ourselves to the Lord in a perpetual covenant, that shall not be forgotten.*

To this purpose also *Ezekiel*, who himself was a Priest, speaks of a religious worship extended to all nations, and of a new covenant which God was to make with them, chap. xvi. verse 60, 61, 62. *Nevertheless I will remember my covenant with thee in the days of thy youth, and I will establish unto thee an everlasting covenant. Then thou shalt remember thy ways, and be ashamed, when thou shalt receive thy sisters, thy elder and thy younger: and I will give them unto thee for daughters, but not by thy covenant. And I will establish my covenant with thee; and thou shalt know that I am the Lord.*

Here is, first, a covenant differing from the former; 2. a covenant wherein other nations were to be included, clearly intimated by the *elder* and *younger sisters* of the synagogue; 3. a covenant whereby the *Gentiles* were to enjoy the same privileges with the *Jews*, and be incorporated with them.

Malachi follows the steps of these Prophets, when he calls the Messiah *the Angel of the covenant*, chap. iii. verse 1. *Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to his temple; even the messenger (Angel) of the covenant, whom ye delight in, behold he shall come, saith the Lord of Hosts.* I know very well that the *Jews* apply those words to *Elias*, whose ministry, as they pretend, was to consist in leading the *Jews* to repentance. But if we read the text with attention, we shall find two messengers mentioned; the first, to prepare the way of the Messiah; and the other is the Messiah himself, who is called *the Angel of the covenant*, as being sent of God to make a new covenant with men.

CHAP. XIX.

That the JEWS, *by a dreadful Effect of their Blindness, were to reject the* MESSIAH.

THIS is a very peculiar mark, which will guide us surely to the knowledge of the Messiah. We find the *Jews* at this day very ready to follow every one that usurps that august title, and to take him for the only true Messiah that was promised them; which is no other than what was infallibly to come to pass.

Neither will this much surprise us, if we consider, 1. That this people, on divers occasions, have given very strange instances of a prodigious blindness: we see them reject *Moses*, notwithstanding God had authorised his call by great and avowed miracles; yea, we find them rejecting *David* also, whom God had so signally appointed to be their king, and the father of the Messiah, of whom we hear these prophecies.

2. That

. That God upbraids them with this blindneſs by his Prophets, as a
o which they were peculiarly inclined; as appears from *Pſalm* lxix.
e 23, 24, 25, 26, and 28. *Let their eyes be darkened, that they ſee not;*
make their loins continually to ſhake. Pour out thine indignation upon
, and let thy wrathful anger take hold of them. Let their habitation be
ate, and none dwell in their tents. For they perſecute him whom thou haſt
ten, and they talk to the grief of thoſe whom thou haſt wounded. Add
ity to their iniquity; and let them not come into thy righteouſneſs. Let
be blotted out of the book of the living, and not be written with the
teous.

One ſees the ſame thing in *Iſaiah*, chap. vi. verſe 9, 10, 11, and 12.
ere the Spirit of God foretels that the *Jews* ſhould ſhut their eyes
nſt the moſt evident and convincing proofs imaginable. *Go*, ſaith
Lord to the Prophet, *and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but under-*
d not; and ſee ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people
and their ears heavy, and ſhut their eyes; leſt they ſee with their eyes,
hear with their ears, and underſtand with their heart, and convert, and
ealed. Then ſaid I, Lord, how long? And he anſwered, Until the cities
waſted without inhabitant, and the houſes without man, and the land be
rly deſolate: and the Lord have removed men far away, and there be a
t forſaking in the midſt of the land.

Nothing can be imagined more particular than this oracle concerning
Jews reſiſting the Prophet, which God expreſſes in terms very uſual
ngſt the Prophets; as if *Iſaiah*, who was only the foreteller of their
g hardened, ſhould himſelf be the cauſe of it.

The Prophet *Hoſea* deſcribes the very ſame complaints of God againſt
Jews for their blindneſs and ignorance, for which he denounces their
ruction. *Hoſ.* iv. verſe 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6. *Hear the word of the*
d, ye children of Iſrael; *for the Lord has a controverſy with the inhabi-*
s of the land, becauſe there is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God
e land. By ſwearing, and lying, and killing, and ſtealing, and com-
ing adultery, they break out, and blood toucheth blood. Therefore ſhall
and mourn, and every one that dwelleth therein ſhall languiſh, with the
ſs of the field, and with the fowls of heaven; yea, the fiſhes of the ſea alſo
l be taken away. Yet let no man ſtrive or reprove another; for thy people
as they that ſtrive with the Prieſt. Therefore ſhalt thou fall in the day,
the Prophet alſo ſhall fall with thee in the night, and I will deſtroy thy
er. My people are deſtroyed for lack of knowledge: becauſe thou haſt
ted knowledge, I will alſo reject thee, that thou ſhalt be no Prieſt to me;
g thou haſt forgotten the law of thy God, I will alſo forget thy children.
The Prophet *Jeremy* ſpeaks to the ſame purpoſe, chap. v. verſe 21,
and 23. *Hear now this, O fooliſh people, and without underſtanding;*
h have eyes, and ſee not; which have ears, and hear not. Fear ye not me,
the Lord? Will ye not tremble at my preſence, who have placed the ſand
he bound of the ſea, by a perpetual decree that it cannot paſs it; and though
waves thereof toſs themſelves, yet can they not prevail; though they roar,
an they not paſs over it? But this people had a revolting and a rebellious
t; they are revolted, and gone. And he reiterates the ſame, chap. viii.
e 7. *The ſtork in the heavens knoweth her appointed times; and the turtle*
and

and the crane, and the ſwallow, obſerve the time of their coming: but my peo ple know not the judgment of the Lord.

Ezekiel proſecutes the ſame matter, chap. ii. verſ. 5 and 8. callin the *Jews* a rebellious houſe. And chap. xii. verſ. 1 and 2. he ſaith *The word of the Lord came unto me, ſaying, Son of man, thou dwelleſt in th midſt of a rebellious houſe, who have eyes to ſee, and ſee not, they have ears t hear, and hear not, for they are a rebellious houſe.*

Neither do the Prophets only repreſent to us in general the blindnes of the *Jews* upon ſeveral occaſions; but they alſo very particularly in form us, that he who was the moſt conſiderable perſon of their ſtate and the great miniſter of God, ſhould be notwithſtanding rejected b them.

And here, firſt, It is worth our noting, that *Moſes* threatens the worſ of calamities to thoſe who ſhould refuſe to hear the great Prophet like unto him whom God was to raiſe to his people, *Deut.* xviii verſe 18.

Secondly, *David*, *Pſalm* cxviii. verſe 22. expreſſes this in theſe words *The ſtone which the builders refuſed, is become the head of the corner.* Fron which words it is evident, 1. That the Meſſiah was to be rejected; 2 That he was to be rejected by thoſe who were intruſted with the care o building the houſe; 3. That this was to be before he ſhould be acknow ledged the great Miniſter of heaven.

God ſpeaks the ſame thing by *Iſaiah*, chap. xxviii. verſe 16. *Behold I lay in Zion for a foundation a ſtone, a tried ſtone, a precious corner-ſtone, ſure foundation: he that believeth ſhall not make haſte.* Which place is t be underſtood of the Meſſiah, by the confeſſion of the *Jews* themſelves.

Daniel follows the ſame notion, chap. ii. verſ. 34, 35. *Thou ſawe till a ſtone was cut out without hands, which ſmote the image upon his feet and brake them to pieces: and the ſtone became a great mountain, and fille the earth.*

On all which prophecies we may make theſe remarks: 1. That Jeſu Chriſt quotes moſt of them, as ſuch, which by the *Jews* themſelves were owned to refer to the Meſſiah. Thus, *Matt.* xxi. verſe 42. he ſaith *Did ye never read in the Scriptures, The ſtone which the builders rejected, th ſame is become the head of the corner.* And St. *Peter*, *Acts* iv. verſe 11 *This is the ſtone which was ſet at nought by you build rs, which is become th head of the corner.* St. *Paul* makes the ſame alluſion, *Epheſ.* ii. verſ 20. *And are built on the foundation of the Apoſtles and Prophets, Jeſus Chri himſelf being the chief corner-ſtone.* And 1. *Cor.* iii. verſe 11. *For othe foundation can no man lay, than that is laid, which is Jeſus Chriſt.* An when Jeſus Chriſt himſelf ſaith unto *Peter*, *Matt.* xvi. verſe 18. *Tho art* Peter, *and upon this rock I will build my church*, &c. he alludes t that of *Daniel*; *Then was the iron, the clay, the braſs, the ſilver, and the gol broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the ſummer threſhin floors, and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them and the* ſtone *which ſmote the image became a great mountain, and filled th whole earth.*

Our Saviour applies alſo to the *Jews* thoſe prophecies which foret their being offended at the Miniſters of heaven; in particular that o

Iſaiah

iah, chap. vi. verse 9. *Go and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not, and see ye indeed, but perceive not.*

2. We may observe that the *Jews* of old applied those prophecies (as Apostles did) to the hardening of their own nation; as appears from t of St. *Paul*, *Rom.* x. verse 21. *But to* Israel *he saith, All the day long ave stretched forth my hand unto a disobedient and gainsaying people.*

3. We must take notice, that the same temper which was in the ant *Jews*, who rejected the Prophets, was found in those who lived at time of our Saviour; and for this, we need only to read the description which *Josephus*, *de Bello Judaico*, *lib.* vii. *cap.* 3. gives of them, ere he compares them with the *Sodomites*, which is the comparison *iah* makes, chap. i. verse 10.

And last of all, we may take notice, That *Josephus* acknowledges that s blindness of the *Jews* was the cause of the final destruction of *Jeusalem*, which was to succeed the death of the Messiah, according to e express oracle of *Daniel*, chap. ix. verse 26.

CHAP. XX.

at the MESSIAH *was to die; and an Account of the several Circumstances of his Death.*

TO be convinced of this truth, we need only prove that what is set down in *Psalm* xxii. *Isaiah* liii. *Daniel* ix. and *Zachariah* xiii. d other prophetical passages of holy Scripture, is to be understood of e Messiah; and the reading of them alone is sufficient to satisfy the eanest capacity, that the person they point at was to lose his life by olence, with several very infamous circumstances.

Now it is certain that both ancient and modern *Jews* interpret these ces of the Messiah; and it is as evident that the Apostles understood em so; and therefore all along applied them to Jesus Christ, follow- g therein the known explications of the Rabbies of their own nation.

It is plain also, that the death and suffering of our Saviour would ve proved a more efficacious argument to refute the Apostles, than all e miracles of Jesus Christ could have been to establish their doctrine, the prophetical writings had not so precisely determined his sufferings d death, with the several circumstances of them.

It is also to be noted, that the prophecies referring to the death of the essiah are generally interwoven with ideas which point to other proetical passages avowedly owned by the *Jews* to have relation to the essiah. Thus, if we compare *Psalm* xxii. verse 28. with *Psalm* lxxii. rs. 8, 9. we shall find the same idea set forth in them both.

And because this character was to be the most proper and distinguish- g note of the Messiah, forasmuch as none with pleasure do precipitate emselves into death, or are masters of the manner and circumstances of

of it, therefore God caused the same to be expressed by the Prophe with the greatest plainness and exactness possible.

It cannot be denied but that some of the Prophets have been ver cruelly persecuted, and that some of them have died in the midst of to ments: but concerning the death of Christ we have many more part culars, viz.

1. That he was to be forsaken by his own friends, *Psalm* xxii. ver 11. *Be not far from me, for trouble is near; for there is none to help.* An *Psalm* lxix. verse 11. *I made sackcloth also my garment, and I became proverb to them.* And, verse 20. *Reproach has broken my heart, and I a full of heaviness; and I looked for some to take pity, but there was none; an for comforters, but I found none.*

2. That he was to be exposed to all manner of reproachful usag *Psalm* xxii. verse 6, 7, and 8. *But I am a worm, and no man; a reproac of men, and despised of the people. All they that see me, laugh me to scorn they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, He trusted in the Lord th he would deliver him; let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him.* An *Psalm* lxix. verse 1, 2, 3, 4. *Save me, O God, for the waters are come i unto my soul. I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing; I am come int deep waters, where the floods overflow me. I am weary of my crying: m throat is dried: mine eyes fail, while I wait for my God. They that hate m without cause are more than the hairs of my head; they that would destroy m being my enemies wrongfully, are mighty.*

The same is represented to us, *Isaiah* liii. verse 4, 5. *Surely he hath born our griefs, and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem him stricken, smitte of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he wa bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him: an with his stripes we are healed.*

3. They take notice that he should be beaten and abused, as appear from *Isaiah* liii. verse 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8. *He is despised and rejected of men a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid, as it were, our face from him: he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath born our griefs, he was wounded for our transgressions,* &c. *The Lord hath laid o him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet h opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter; and as a shee before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth. He was cut of from the land of the living; for the transgression of my people was he stricken.*

4. They declare that he should be sold. *Zech.* xi. verse 12 and 13. *An I said unto them, If ye think good, give me my price; and if not, forbear: so th weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver. And the Lord said unto me, Cast i unto the potter; a goodly price that I was prized at of them. And I took th thirty pieces of silver, and cast them to the potter, in the house of the Lord.*

5. They make mention of his being condemned by the *Jews* an Heathens. *Psalm* ii. verse 2. *The kings of the earth set themselves, and th rulers take counsel together, against the Lord and against his anointed.* An *Psalm* xxii. verse 16. *For dogs have compassed me, the assembly of th wicked have inclosed me; they pierced my hands and my feet.* And *Psalm* lxix verse 12. *They that sit in the gate speak against me, and I was the song of th drunkards.* And *Isaiah* liii. verse 8. *He was taken from prison and from judgment*

rment: and who ſhall declare his generation? for he was cut off from the of the living, for the tranſgreſſion of my people was he ſtricken.

. They ſpecify his death on the croſs. *Pſalm* xxii. verſe 16. *They ced my hands and my feet.* And *Zech.* xii. verſe 10. *And they ſhall look me whom they have pierced.*

. They intimate his dying between thieves. *Iſaiah* liii. verſe 12. *refore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he ſhall divide the with the ſtrong; becauſe he has poured out his ſoul unto death, and was bered with tranſgreſſors.*

. They take notice of his being mocked before his death. *Pſalm* . verſe 6, 7, 8. *But I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and iſed of the people. All they that ſee me, laugh me to ſcorn; they ſhoot out ip, they ſhake the head,* &c. And *Pſalm* lxix. verſe 17, 18, 19. *Hide hy face from thy ſervant, for I am in trouble; hear me ſpeedily. Draw unto my ſoul, and redeem it; deliver me, becauſe of mine enemies. Thou known my reproach, my ſhame, and my diſhonour: mine adverſaries are efore thee.*

. That they who put him to death ſhould divide his garments. *Pſalm* . verſe 18. *They part my garments amongſt them, and caſt lots upon my re.*

0. That the Meſſiah ſhould complain that God had forſaken him in hands of his enemies. Pſalm xxii. verſe 1, 2. *My God, my God, haſt thou forſaken me? why art thou ſo far from helping me, and from vords of my roaring? O my God, I cry in the day time, and thou heareſt ot; and in the night ſeaſon am not ſilent.*

1. That they would give him vinegar and gall to drink. *Pſalm* . verſe 21. *They gave me alſo gall for my meat, and in my thirſt they me vinegar to drink.*

2. They ſet before our eyes the manner of his death on the croſs. *n* xxii. verſe 14, 15, 16, 17. *I am poured out like water, and all my are out of joint: my heart is like wax, it is melted in the midſt of my ls. My ſtrength is dried up like a potſherd, and my tongue cleaveth to aws: and thou haſt brought me into the duſt of death. For dogs have aſſed me, the aſſembly of the wicked have encloſed me; they pierced my and my feet. I may tell all my bones: they look and ſtare upon me.* And *h* liii. verſe 7, 8, 9.

. That not one of his bones ſhould be broken. *Pſalm* xxxiv. verſe *He keepeth all his bones; not one of them is broken.*

. That he was to be buried in the ſepulchre of a rich man. *Iſaiah* verſe 9. *He made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his ; becauſe he had done no violence, neither was deceit found in his .*

e may make theſe following reflexions on the foregoing oracles.

That here are many very different events and circumſtances, all ing in the ſame end.

That many of theſe paſſages that might be queſtioned whether they particularly applicable to the Meſſiah, are joined with ſuch hints n no way agree with the Prophets that uttered them. Thus we find n the xxiid *Pſalm* there are many expreſſions which cannot be ed to *David.*

3. That

3. That moſt of theſe prophecies are avowedly attributed to the Meſſiah by the moſt ancient authors of the Synagogue. And the modern *Jews* themſelves refer them to ſome that ſuffered a violent death, as to Rabbi *Akiba*, who died in the ſecond century.

4. That the Apoſtles unanimouſly applied them to Jeſus Chriſt, the true Meſſiah, following therein the general conſent of their nation.

CHAP. XXI.

That the MESSIAH *was ſoon after to riſe again.*

FORASMUCH as death entered into the world by ſin, and that the Meſſiah was to take it away, we may eaſily conceive, that if the Meſſiah were, according to the Divine diſpoſal, to ſubmit to death, he could not long continue ſubject to it. He who was to reſtore life to thoſe who were dead, could never be confined and impriſoned in a grave: and he who was ſuperior to *Enoch* and *Elias*, who aſcended into heaven, becauſe he alone was exalted to the right hand of God to reign there for ever, as the prophecies concerning him aſſure us, ought certainly to leave his ſepulchre by a glorious reſurrection.

And this we are poſitively aſſured of by the ancient oracles. *Pſalm* xvi. verſ. 10, 11. *Thou wilt not leave my ſoul in hell; neither wilt thou ſuffer thine holy one to ſee corruption. Thou wilt ſhew me the path of life; in thy preſence is fulneſs of joy, at thy right hand there are pleaſures for evermore.* And to aſſure us that theſe and the like paſſages are applicable to none but the Meſſiah, we find in the ſame *Pſalms* expreſſions too high to be applied to the authors themſelves: as for example, *Pſalm* xxx. verſ. 1, 2, 3. *I will extol thee, O Lord, for thou haſt lifted me up, and haſt not made my foes to rejoice over me. O Lord, my God, I cried unto thee, and thou haſt healed me. O Lord, thou haſt brought up my ſoul from the grave, thou haſt kept me alive, that I ſhould not go down to the pit.* And *Pſalm* xli. verſ. 8, 9, 10. *An evil diſeaſe, ſay they, cleaveth faſt unto him; and now that he lieth, he ſhall riſe up no more. Yea, mine own familiar friend in whom I truſted, which did eat of my bread, hath lift up his heel againſt me. But thou, O Lord, be merciful unto me, and raiſe me up, that I may requite them.* And *Pſalm* xlix. verſ. 15. *But God will redeem my ſoul from the power of the grave, for he ſhall receive me.* Pſalm lvi. verſ. 11, 12, 13. *In God have I put my truſt, I will not be afraid what man can do unto me. Thy vows are upon me, O God, I will render praiſe unto thee. For thou haſt delivered my ſoul from death,* &c. Pſalm lxxi. verſe 20. *Thou who haſt ſhewed me great and ſore trouble, ſhalt quicken me again, and ſhalt bring me up again from the depths of the earth.* Pſalm cxliii. verſ. 11, 12. *Quicken me, O Lord, for thy name's ſake, for thy righteouſneſs ſake bring my ſoul out of trouble.*

: and of thy mercy cut off mine enemies, and destroy all them that afflict soul, for I am thy servant.

Hosea speaks to the same purpose, chap. xiii. verse 14. *I will ransom m from the power of the grave, I will redeem them from death. O death, will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction: repentance shall be from mine eyes.*

Isaiah expresses the very same thing, chap. xxv. verse 8. *He will swal- up death in victory, and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all es; and the rebuke of his people shall he take from off all the earth; for the rd hath spoken it.* And yet more expressly, chap. liii. verf. 10 and 11. *it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou lt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. He shall see the travel of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my hteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.*

For the better understanding of which passages, we are to observe, That the Messiah, in many or most of them, compriseth all believers th himself, according to that maxim of the *Jews*, who attribute to Messiah, the greatest of all the Prophets, whatsoever God vouchsafed any one of the Prophets; and according to this principle Jesus Christ aks, *Matth.* xii. verf. 39, 40. *An evil and adulterous generation seeketh er a sign, and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the Prophet nah. For as* Jonah *was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, shall the son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the th.*

2. That upon this account the Messiah is represented to us, not as ng again alone, but as making all his brethren partakers of the same ry; which makes the Prophets speak of him, not as a single person, in common with others, who by him are made possessors of the same vantages.

3. That most of these texts are quoted by the Apostles, who in so ng followed the sense of the whole nation, as appears from *Acts* ii. f. 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, and 29. *Whom God hath raised, having loosed the ns of death; because it was not possible that he should be holden of it. For* vid *speaketh concerning him, I foresaw the Lord always before my face, he is at my right hand, that I should not be moved. Therefore did my heart ice, and my tongue was glad: moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope: be- se thou wilt not leave my soul in Hell, neither wilt thou suffer thy holy one ee corruption. Thou hast made known to me the ways of life: thou shalt e me full of joy with thy countenance. Men and brethren, let me freely k unto you of the Patriarch* David, *that he is both dead and buried, and sepulchre is with us unto this day.* And *Acts* xiii. verf. 30, 31, 32, 33, 35, 36, and 37. *But God raised him from the dead. And he was seen y days of them which came up with him from* Galilee *to* Jerusalem, *who are witnesses unto the people. And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that promise which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto heir children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written he second* Psalm, *Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee. And as erning that he raised him up from the dead, now no more to return to cor- tion, he said on this wise, I will give you the sure mercies of* David.

Wherefore he saith also in another Psalm, *Thou shalt not suffer thine holy one to see corruption. For* David, *after he had served his own generation, by the will of God fell asleep, and was gathered to his fathers, and saw corruption. But he whom God raised again, saw no corruption.*

In like manner we find St. *Paul* alluding to that of *Hosea* xiii. verse 14. in I. *Cor.* xv. verse 55. *O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?*

CHAP. XXII.

That the MESSIAH *was to ascend into Heaven, and send down from thence the miraculous gifts of Prophecy, Languages, &c.*

THIS was a thing which might rationally enough be expected (*b*) for the Messiah being to resemble *Moses*, who had not only the gifts of the holy spirit himself, but also in a manner communicated the same to the heads of the congregation of *Israel*, it was reasonable to infer, that the Messiah was to receive much more eminent gifts, and to communicate them to far greater numbers.

But besides this, God had expressly promised it by *David*, *Psalm* cx. verse. 1, 2. where he represents the Messiah sitting at the right hand of God. *The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool. The Lord shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion: Rule thou in the midst of thine enemies.*

It is worth our noting, that *Daniel* represents to us the same notion where he speaks of the kingdom of the Messiah, chap. vii. verse. 13, 14. *I saw in the night visions, and behold, one like the son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion and glory, and a kingdom that all people, nations and languages should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.* Where doth God dwell, unless in heaven?

David expresses himself in terms which import something too great to be applied to the symbolical ark of the covenant, *Psalm* xxiv. verse. 7, 8, 9. *Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors, and the king of glory shall come in. Who is this king of glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle,* &c.

He speaks further of the glorious kingdom of the Messiah, *Psalm* xlv. verse. 5, 6, 7. *Thine arrows are sharp in the heart of the king's enemies, whereby the people fall under thee. Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever, the sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre. Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness; therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.* It is evident that *David* addresses himself there to the Messiah, because he styles him a God anointed above his fellow

(*b*) Deut. xviii. 18.

ows. And he pursues the same idea, *Psalm* lxviii. verse 18. *Thou hast scended on high, thou hast led captivity captive; thou hast received gifts for men, yea for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell amongst them.* Nothing can be imagined more express than these words, which ively represent to us the ascension of the Messiah, and the pouring orth of prophetical gifts, to bring the heathens to the service of God.

Isaiah speaks the same, chap. xliv. verse 3. *For I will pour water upon im that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my spirit upon hy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring.* The waters here spoken f, according to the ordinary style of the Prophets, are nothing else but he Graces of God's Spirit.

Joel expresses himself very plainly in this matter, chap. ii. verse 28, 9, 30, 31, 32. *And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out of ny spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your ld men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions. And also upon he servants, and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit. And I will shew wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood and fire and illars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, efore the great and terrible day of the Lord come. And it shall come to pass, hat whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord, shall be delivered: for in* nount Zion, *and in* Jerusalem, *shall be deliverance, as the Lord hath said, nd in the remnant whom the Lord shall call.*

Nothing can be conceived more particular than this oracle, concern- ng the effusion of the prophetical gifts upon the servants of the Messiah, fter his ascension. For, 1. He clearly hints at the several ways of pro- hecy which shall be bestowed upon the subjects of the Messiah; 2. That this great event was to be before the destruction of *Jerusalem*, which St. *Peter* foretels as a thing at the door, *Act.* ii. vers. 30, 31, 32. After he had shewed that the wonderful effusion of the Spirit at Pentecost was a literal accomplishing of the prophecy of *Joel*, he adds, *Therefore being a Prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit n his throne: he seeing this before, spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption. This Jesus has God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses.*

Ezekiel goes on with the same views with *Joel*, chap. xxxvi. vers. 6 and 27. *A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you walk in my statutes; and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.* And hap. xxxix. verse 29. *Neither will I hide my face any more from them: or I have poured out my spirit upon the house of* Israel, *saith the Lord God.*

And *Zechariah* agrees with both the foregoing Prophets, chap. xii. erse 10. *And I will pour upon the house of* David, *and upon the inhabitants f* Jerusalem, *the spirit of grace and of supplications; and they shall look upon m whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him as one mourneth r his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him as one that is in bitterness for is first-born.*

It is obvious to make these following observations upon those oracles.

1. That the Meſſiah was to be raiſed above the reach of any of his enemies.

2. That he was to aſcend to heaven, and to be inſtated there in glory, in order to his being dignified and glorified above all nations.

3. That he was from thence to ſend down prophetical graces plentifully, which made his entrance into heaven a kind of triumph.

4. That this great event was to precede the deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, to which the Prophet *Joel* in the fore-cited place ſeems to allude. The Meſſiah was to form a new ſociety, which was to be regulated, not by the laws given on mount *Sinai*, but by thoſe which were to be publiſhed from mount *Zion*.

CHAP. XXIII.

That the GENTILES *in the Time of the* MESSIAH *were to be called to the Knowledge of the true God.*

THIS article being one of the moſt important and moſt viſible characters of the times of the Meſſiah, and alſo the great effect of his miniſtry, we ſee that God had a particular care to divulge the ſame by a multitude of prophetical repreſentations of it.

For not only had he declared that the *ſeed of the woman ſhould bruiſe the ſerpent's head* (*l*); that is, the works of the Devil. And we cannot deny, but that the errors and idolatries of the *Gentiles*, and their vices which ariſe from thence, were the fruits of ſin, which this unhappy ſpirit brought into the world. It was not only foretold that God would *perſuade* Japhet *to dwell in the tents of* Sem (*m*), by uniting the poſterities of both thoſe Patriarchs in one and the ſame religion. Not only had he ſignified that the Meſſiah ſhould reign over the children of *Seth*, that is, over all the poſterity of *Noah*, the offſpring of *Cham* not excepted; not only had he foretold that all nations, kindreds, and families, ſhould be bleſſed in the Meſſiah (*n*).

But God went much farther afterwards; for, as the light of the revelation increaſed, ſo the ſame was declared more diſtinctly. For,

1. The Patriarch *Jacob* tells that the Meſſiah ſhould be the deſire and expectation of all nations. *Gen.* xlix. verſe 10. *The ſceptre ſhall not depart from* Judah, *nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until* Shiloh *come*; *and unto him ſhall the gathering of the people be.*

2. *Moſes* threatens the *Jews*, that if they deſpiſed the law of God, ſtrangers, that is, *Gentiles*, ſhould be preferred before them. *Deut.* xxviii. verſe 43. *The ſtranger that is within thee ſhall get up above thee very high*; *and thou ſhalt come down very low.* The ſame Prophet menaceth them from God, that he would ſtir up their jealouſy, by calling a fooliſh

(*l*) Gen. iii. 15. (*m*) Gen. ix. 27.
(*n*) Gen. xii. & Ch. xviii. & xxii.

foolish people to his service and worship. *Deut.* xxxii. verse 21, *They ve moved me to jealousy with that which is not God, they have provoked me anger with their vanities; and I will move them to jealousy with those hich are not a people, I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation.* Nothing can be said more express and particular than these last words f that great lawgiver and founder of the state of the *Jews*.

3. *David* sets forth the empire of the Messiah, as that which was to ach over all the earth. *Psalm* ii. verse 8. *Ask of me, and I shall give ee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for y possession.* And *Psalm* xxii. vers. 27, 28, 29, 30. *All the ends of the orld shall remember and turn unto the Lord; and all the kingdoms of the tions shall worship before thee. For the kingdom is the Lord's, and he is overnor amongst the nations. All they that be fat upon the earth, shall eat d worship; all they that go down to the dust, shall bow before him. A seed all serve him; it shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation. Psalm* lxxii. rs. 8, 9, 10, 11. *He shall have dominion from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth. They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before m; and his enemies shall lick the dust. The kings of* Tarshish *and of the es shall bring presents, the kings of* Sheba *and* Seba *shall offer gifts. Yea, l kings shall fall down before him, all nations shall serve him.* Which prohecy is the more remarkable, because the promise made to *Abraham* is ere repeated in so many words, viz. *That all nations of the earth should bless'd in the Messiah. Psalm* cii. verse 15. *So the heathen shall fear the me of the Lord, and all the kings of the earth thy glory.* And *Psalm* cx. rse 2. *The Lord shall send the rod of thy strength out of* Zion: *rule thou the midst of thine enemies.* One ought to transcribe almost the whole ook of *Psalms*, to take notice of all the passages which are to this purpose.

The Prophet *Hosea* declares in general terms, That it was not an imssible thing for those who had been God's people, to cease to be so; for those that were not his people, to become his people; chap. i. rse 10. *Yet the number of the children of* Israel *shall be as the sand of the , which cannot be measured or numbered; and it shall come to pass, that in place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people, there it shall be d unto them, Ye are the sons of the living God.*

Isaiah mentions this so often, and in such an emphatical manner, that seems to be the main thing he drives at in all his writings. Chap. ii. rs. 2, 3. he speaks thus: *And it shall come to pass in the last days that the untain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, d shall be exalted above the hills, and all nations shall flow unto it. And ny people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the rd, to the house of the God of* Jacob; *and he will teach us of his ways, d we will walk in his paths; for out of* Zion *shall go forth the law, and the rd of the Lord from* Jerusalem. And chap. xi. verse 10. *In that day re shall be a root of* Jesse, *which shall stand for an ensign of the people, to it ll the* Gentiles *seek.* And, chap. xviii. verse 7, he makes a manifest usion to the *expectation of all nations.* In chap. xlii. verse 1, 2. 3, 4. repeats the same thing: *Behold my servant whom I uphold, mine elect whom my soul delighteth; I will put my spirit upon him, he shall bring th judgment to the* Gentiles. *He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his ce to be heard in the streets. A bruised reed shall he not break, and the*

ſmoking flax ſhall he not quench: he ſhall bring forth judgment unto the earth; and the iſles ſhall wait for his law. Chap. lv. verſ. 4, 5. *Behold, I have given thee for a witneſs of the people, a leader and a commander to the people. Behold thou ſhalt call a nation that thou knoweſt not, and nations that knew not thee ſhall run unto thee, becauſe of the Lord thy God, and for the Holy One of* Iſrael, *for he hath glorified thee.* But one ſees theſe truths in their greateſt luſtre in the lxth chap. of his prophecies, verſ. 3, 4, 5. *The* Gentiles *ſhall come to thy light, and kings to the brightneſs of thy riſing. Lift up thine eyes round about, and ſee: all that gather themſelves together, they come to thee; thy ſons ſhall come from far, and thy daughters ſhall be nurſed at thy ſide. Then thou ſhalt ſee and ſhine, and thine heart ſhall fear and be enlarged, becauſe the abundance of the ſea ſhall be converted unto thee, the forces of the* Gentiles *ſhall come unto thee.* And chap. lxii. verſe 2. *The* Gentiles *ſhall ſee thy righteouſneſs, and all kings thy glory: and thou ſhalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord ſhall name.* And verſ. 11 and 12. *Behold, the Lord hath proclaimed unto the ends of the world, Say ye to the daughter of* Zion, *Behold, thy ſalvation cometh; behold, his reward is with him, and his work is before him. And they ſhall call them the holy people, the redeemed of the Lord. And thou ſhalt be called Sought out, A City not forſaken.* And chap. lxv. verſe 1. *I am ſought of them that aſked not for me; I am found of them that ſought me not: I ſaid, Behold me, behold me, unto a nation that was not called by my name.* And chap. lxvi. verſe 18. *It ſhall come to paſs, that I will gather all nations and tongues, and they ſhall come and ſee my glory.*

Amos (who was contemporary with *Iſaiah*) ſpeaks the ſame thing, chap. ix. verſ. 11, 12. *In that day will I raiſe up the tabernacle of* David *which is fallen, and cloſe up the branches thereof; and I will raiſe up his ruins, and I will build it, as in the days of old. That they may poſſeſs the remnant of* Edom, *and of all the heathen, which are called by my name, ſaith the Lord which doth this.*

The Prophet *Micah* alſo follows the Prophet *Iſaiah* ſtep by ſtep. *Mich.* iv. verſ. 1, 2, 3. *But in the laſt days it ſhall come to paſs, that the mountain of the houſe of the Lord ſhall be eſtabliſhed in the top of the mountains, and it ſhall be exalted above the hills, and people ſhall flow unto it. And many nations ſhall come and ſay, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the houſe of the God of* Jacob, *and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for the law ſhall go forth of* Zion, *and the word of the Lord from* Jeruſalem. *And he ſhall judge among many people, and rebuke ſtrong nations afar off; and they ſhall beat their ſwords into plough-ſhares, and their ſpears into pruning-hooks: nation ſhall not lift up a ſword againſt nation, neither ſhall they learn war any more.*

Zephaniah is as clear as any of the reſt, chap. ii. verſe 11. *They ſhall worſhip him, every one from his place, even all the iſles of the heathen.* And chap. 3, verſ. 9, 10. *Then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the Lord, to ſerve him with one conſent. From beyond the rivers of* Ethiopia, *my ſuppliants, the daughter of my diſperſed, ſhall bring mine offering.*

Jeremiah, in the fourth chapter of his prophecies, verſe 2. confirms the ſame truth; as likewiſe chap. xvi. verſe 19. and more expreſsly chap. xxxi. verſe 34. *And they ſhall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every*

ery man his brother, saying, Know the Lord; for they shall all know me, om the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord.

After the return of the captivity, we find that the Prophets still pur-ed the same ideas. *Haggai* ii. verse. 7, 8. *And I will shake all nations, d the desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, ith the Lord of Hosts. The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the rd of Hosts.*

Zechariah speaks in like manner, chap. ii. verse. 10, 11. *Sing and re-ice, O daughter of* Zion; *for lo, I come, and I will dwell in the midst of ee, saith the Lord. And many nations shall be joined to the Lord in that day, nd shall be my people; and I will dwell in the midst of thee, and thou shalt now that the Lord of Hosts hath sent me unto thee.* And chap. viii. verse. 0, 21, 22. *Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, It shall yet come to pass, that there all come people, and the inhabitants of many cities: and the inhabitants of one ty shall go to another, saying, Let us go speedily to pray before the Lord, and seek the Lord of Hosts: I will go also. Yea, many people and strong nations all come to seek the Lord of Hosts in* Jerusalem, *and to pray before the Lord.* nd chap. ix. ver. 10. he expresses the same thing more distinctly. *And will cut off the chariot from* Ephraim, *and the horse from* Jerusalem, *and e battle-bow shall be cut off: and he shall speak peace unto the heathen; and s dominion shall be from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the rth.*

Malachi speaks to the same purpose with the greatest clearness imagi-able, chap. i. verse. 10, 11. *Who is there among you that shuts the doors, kindles fire on mine altar for nought? I have no pleasure in you, saith the ord of Hosts, neither will I accept an offering at your hand: for from the sing of the sun, even unto the going down of the same, my name shall be great nong the* Gentiles; *and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, nd a pure offering: for my name shall be great among the heathen, saith the ord of Hosts.*

On all which passages one may make these observations:

1. That all this whole series of ideas hath as much connexion to ne another, as the words of those oracles have which we have now lleged.

2. That these Prophets have set it forth with all its possible characters, y the original of these people, calling them the children of *Seth*, by eir countries, *Egypt*, *Assyria*, the *East* and *West*; by their idolatry, y their aversion to the *Jews*, their ignorance, &c.

3. That these prophecies were generally understood by the *Jews* of ld, of the calling of the *Gentiles*, as appears from the use the Apostles ade of them when they preached to the *Gentiles*.

4. That forasmuch as God had ordered proselytes to be received into ie Jewish communion, he seemed thereby to have hinted to them, that hat he had enjoined them as to particulars, ought with much more eason to be practised in general to all the nations of the world, and ught also to be universally desired.

5. That the modern *Jews* themselves constantly believed, that the Messiah should lead the *Gentiles* to repentance. So *Kimchi*, *Moses*, *Maimonides*, and many other authors, since the *Talmudists*.

6. That the opinion which the *Jews* have entertained, that the Mes-

ſiah, as a great conqueror, was to ſubdue the nations, proceeds only from the ſenſe of the oppreſſion they have been, and ſtill are, under, which makes them ſo earneſtly deſire a temporal deliverance from the power of the *Gentiles*, by means of the Meſſiah: and the pompous expreſſions of ſome of the Prophets have ſtrengthened this belief in them; though they cannot deny but that the ſame prophetical paſſages do imply that the Meſſiah was to ſubject the *Gentiles* by the way of inſtruction.

CHAP. XXIV.

That the JEWS *were to be rejected in the Time of the* MESSIAH.

THERE are three things which make this particular very conſiderable.

The firſt is, That it ſeems altogether oppoſite to the deſign of God, who was entered into covenant with the *Jews*, excluding all other nations of the earth.

The ſecond is, That nothing ever was a greater ſcandal to the *Jews* than the thoughts of a poſſibility that God ſhould ever caſt off their nation.

The third is, That the rejection of the *Jews* ſeemed leſs poſſible in the time of the Meſſiah, than at any other time; the Meſſiah being, according to their perſuaſion, to procure the ſalvation of the *Jews* in the firſt place, and before other nations were made partakers of thoſe bleſſings which he brought along with him.

And it was upon this account that God hath forgot nothing which might make thoſe oracles that relate to the rejection of the *Jews*, in the time of the Meſſiah, very ſenſible.

The chief privileges which made the *Jews* conſider themſelves as God's peculiar people, were theſe.

1. God himſelf was in a peculiar manner their king and Sovereign; which gave *Joſephus* occaſion to call their ſtate a theocracy.

2. Their religious ſervice did wholly depend upon God, who had inſtituted their order of prieſthood.

3. God had placed them in a country by themſelves, and ſeparated them from all other nations.

4. God had given them the *Urim* and *Thummim*, which gave them an infallible reſolution in all important caſes happening to their ſtate; which was an evident mark of the Divine preſence and direction.

5. God gave them particular marks of his bleſſing, the extraordinary fruitfulneſs which continually uſhered in their ſabbatical year; the ſecurity which they enjoyed during their three ſolemn feaſts; and above all, the deliverers which he from time to time raiſed up for them, their fourteen judges and kings.

And

And God alſo threatened them with evils oppoſite to theſe bleſſings; l all this is denounced againſt them ſtep by ſtep.

1. He declares that he would no longer be their God.

2. That he would aboliſh and reject their order of prieſthood, which s accordingly executed by degrees.

3. That he would turn them out of their own country, without re- ery.

4. That they ſhould have no more Prophets or revelations.

5. That he would take away from them all the marks of his protec- n. The paſſages expreſſing theſe ſeveral particulars are here ſubjoined, ich may be eaſily ranged under the foregoing heads, that we may un- ſtand the better that God hath plainly foretold the rejection of the *ws* at the time of the Meſſiah.

1. *Moſes* then threatens them with a terrible deſolation, *Deut.* xxviii. f. 28, 29. *The Lord ſhall ſmite thee with madneſs and blindneſs, and aſto- ſhment of heart: and thou ſhalt grope at noon day, as the blind gropeth in kneſs, and thou ſhalt not proſper in thy ways, and thou ſhalt be only op- preſſed and ſpoiled evermore, and no man ſhall ſave thee.*

Manaſſeh acknowledges that God in this paſſage foretels, not only their t deſolation under *Nebuchadnezzar*, but alſo that which happened der *Titus Veſpaſian*; the eagle mentioned at the 49th verſe of that apter, being not only applicable to *Nebuchadnezzar*, whom *Ezekiel*, ap. xvii. repreſents under that notion, but more particularly to the *man* emperor *Titus*, whoſe eagles gave a literal accompliſhment to t prophecy.

This makes it evident, that at the ſame time when God threatens m with their firſt deſolation, he alſo denounces to them the laſt; and t conſequently we may apply thoſe paſſages to the ſecond rejection of *Jews*, which were ſpoken of the firſt.

2. *Hoſea* expreſſeth the ſame in his firſt, ſecond, and third chapters, ere he particularly foretels their being deprived of the royal dignity, eſthood, and prophecy.

3. *Iſaiah* ſpeaks to the ſame purpoſe in his firſt, ſecond, and fifth apters; as alſo chap. xxviii, lxii, l, and lxvi. and in his xxvth chap- he ſpeaks as if no reſtoration was to be expected.

4. *Amos* repreſents the ſame thing, chap. v. verſ. 16, 17, and 21, 22. *erefore the Lord, the God of Hoſts, the Lord ſaith thus: Wailing ſhall be in ſtreets; and they ſhall ſay in all the high-ways, Alas! alas! and they ſhall the huſbandman to mourning, and ſuch as are ſkilful of lamentation to wail- . And in all vineyards ſhall be wailing; for I will paſs through thee, ſaith Lord. I hate, I deſpiſe your feaſt-days; and I will not ſmell in your ſolemn mblies: though ye offer me burnt-offerings and your meat-offerings, I will accept them, neither will I regard the peace-offering of your fat beaſts.* here he hints that their deſolation ſhall be without recovery.

5. *Jeremiah* is very expreſs in chap. v, vi, and x. verſe 11. where he lares that their deſtruction ſhould be without remedy; as alſo ap. xii. and xxxi.

6. *Daniel* follows their ſteps, chap. ix. verſ. 25, 26, 27. where he ectly points at the deſtruction of *Jeruſalem* and the temple. The rds are theſe: *Know therefore and underſtand, that from the going forth*

of

of the commandment, to restore and build Jerusalem, *unto the Messiah t Prince, shall be seven weeks; and threescore and two weeks the streets shall built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. And after the threescor and two weeks shall* MESSIAH *be cut off, but not for himself: and th people of the Prince that shall come, shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; an the end thereof shall be with a flood; and unto the end of the war desolation are determined.* It is worth our observing, that *Josephus* (*o*) the histo rian, a little after the destruction of *Jerusalem*, acknowledges that th prophecy of *Daniel* did expressly foretel the ruin of the temple of *Jeru salem*, and of the *Jewish* government, by the arms of the *Roman* empire which himself was an eye-witness of.

7. *Zechariah* speaks after the same manner, chap. xi. vers. 9. *The said I, I will not feed you: that that dieth, let it die; and that that is to be cu off, let it be cut off; and let the rest eat, every one the flesh of another.*

8. And *Malachi* follows these common ideas, chap. i. vers. 10 and 11 *Who is there among you that shuts the doors for nought? Neither do ye kindl fire on mine altar for nought. I have no pleasure in you, saith the Lord of Hosts neither will I accept an offering at your hand. For from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same, my name shall be great among the* Gen tiles; *and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure of fering: for my name shall be great among the heathen, saith the Lord o Hosts.*

I cannot conceive how any that consider the succession of these ideas so interwoven one with another, can have the least doubt whether th *Jews* were to be rejected at the coming of the Messiah, or no; especiall since the Apostles, and St. *Paul* in particular, have made it appear, tha the Prophets so plainly did foretel this truth.

CHAP. XXV.

Of the Time which succeeded the Publishing of these Prophecies, till the Comin of the MESSIAH.

THUS we have seen an abridgment of the most remarkable oracle uttered, either by God himself, or by Prophets, whom he mad use of to declare his designs. I might easily have alledged a far greate number; but I chose rather to content myself with these, to avoid th confusion which the multiplicity of citations is apt to occasion. An I question not but these I have mentioned, will suffice to give us an ide of God's promise concerning the Messiah sufficiently great, and enabl us to make a judgment, whether that which the Christians declare t have been the accomplishment of it, be so indeed.

In the mean time, for the further clearing of this matter, I desire th reader to make some reflexions on the whole matter, which seem to m to deserve a serious attention.

Th

(*o*) Antiq. Lib. x.

he firſt is, That God hath by degrees put an end to thoſe diviſions were between ſome other nations and the *Jews*, founded on their s of the promiſe of the Meſſiah, as the time of its accompliſhment near.

Ve hear little now of the enmity of the *Iſhmaelites* againſt the *Jews*: having placed them in the deſert of *Paran*, they have indeed con-ed there in a manner invincible, but alſo without any great commu-tion with their neighbour nations.

s for the *Moabites* and *Ammonites*, they had their kingdoms on the ers of the Holy Land, and continued there till the time of *Nebuchad-ar*, ſince which we find little mention made of them, as being in a ner wholly confounded with other nations; only we meet with ſome memorials of the *Ammonites*, whoſe pretenſions to that promiſe e the weaker of the two, as being the poſterity of *Lot*'s younger ghter.

t is worth our obſerving, That moſt of the prophecies of *David*, as as of the following Prophets, which thunder forth ſuch terrible de-ciations againſt the pride of thoſe people, threatening them with the e of God and final deſtruction, ſeem to have an eye to the old quar-nd jealouſy; their ſtate quarrel which happened afterwards, ſucceed-to this their firſt averſion, and hatred of the *Jews*.

The ſtate and government of the *Edomites*, as well as their jealouſy nſt *Iſrael*, continued till after *Cyrus*, who granted them the liberty of rning to their own country, as well as to the *Jews* who had been car-away captives with them by *Nebuchadnezzar*; but contrary to the e they had of being re-ſtabliſhed to their former eſtate, we find, that ording to the prophecy of *Malachi*, they continued in bondage to their ghbours, yea to the *Jews* themſelves, until *Herod* the *Edomite*, poſſeſſ-himſelf of the throne of *Judea*, was probably flattered by thoſe of own nation, and by ſome *Jews* alſo, into a belief of his being the niſed Meſſiah.

Ve muſt alſo take notice, That the Divine Providence ſeems to have tinued this people ſo long, on purpoſe that the ſpirit of jealouſy ch was between them and the *Jews*, might preſerve the notion of the niſed Meſſiah more freſh and lively, and to engage men to a more ntive conſideration of the prophecies concerning the ſame; and that l, by confounding them afterwards with other nations, intended lly to take away their pretenſions; the ſervice which before they lered to the *Jewiſh* church, being no longer needful, after ſo clear diſtinct a revelation.

This reflexion will be owned to be more than a conjecture, if we con-r God's dealing with the ten tribes: God ſuffers them to be carried y captives by *Salmanaſſar*, leaving only the tribes of *Judah*, *Levi*, *Benjamin*, to be afterwards the depoſitaries of the Divine oracles.

The ſecond is, That as it appears that God hath kept ſome diſtance ime in his revelation, that the authority of the Prophets might be y and firmly eſtabliſhed, which, as I have obſerved, was done by the mpliſhment of ſome prophecies, reſpecting ſome particular matters fact near at hand; ſo it pleaſed God, for above four hundred years, ave the *Jews* without the light of prophecy; becauſe that which he had

had given them till *Malachi*'s time, was sufficient to make them kno the Messiah, when he should appear in the world.

The third is, That this cessation of the gifts of prophecy among t *Jews* did serve to increase their desires for the coming of the Messia in whose days those gifts (which were the peculiar glory of their natio were to be restored in far greater abundance than had ever been grante to them before.

A fourth reflexion, which is well worth our attentive consideratio is, That God so ordered it in his providence, that all the books of th *Old Testament* were translated into the *Greek* about one hundred yea after *Malachi*, that they might be communicated to all nations; th *Greek* tongue being at that time, and indeed ever since the reign o *Alexander* the Great, a language the most known and generally spoken i the world, he having with his power carried it into the *South* and *East*.

It is natural to conceive, that the Divine Providence hereby designe these three things:

First, To establish and confirm the authority of those Divine oracles by delivering them into the hands of the heathen, by the public autho rity of the *Jewish* nation, at the desire of a king of *Egypt*.

Secondly, To prevent cavilling about the explication of those oracles Thus, for instance, we see there is no place left to dispute the transla tion of that prophecy, *Behold, a virgin shall conceive*, seeing the LXX in terpreters, who were *Jews*, have rendered it so themselves, some ages be fore any contests were started about it between the *Jews* and *Christians*.

The third was, To prepare and dispose the heathen for receiving th religion of the Messiah.

And indeed we may easily comprehend, 1. That it was necessary tha the prophetical writings should be communicated to the heathen, in or der to their ready submitting themselves to the authority of the Messiah whom they knew by those characters which had been given of him 2. That it was not fitting that the heathen should wholly depend on th authority of the *Jews*, forasmuch as the same Divine oracles do ex pressly affirm, that the Messiah was to be rejected by the greatest par of them.

I shall conclude these reflexions with a short view of the state of th commonwealth and religion of the *Jews*, since the last of the Prophets.

First, One finds that this government subsisted as distinct from al other nations of the earth, as ever it did before: we see the honou wherewith *Alexander* the Great treated their high-priest; and that, when he was appointed arbitrator of the difference between them and the *Sa maritans*, he determined the matter in favour of the *Jews*.

One sees that *Alexander* preserved them in the enjoyment of thei rights and liberties, as they enjoyed them under the kings of *Persia*; and in particular exempted them from paying any tribute every seventh year because then they did not sow their ground, and consequently could no reap.

And if we find that *Ptolemy* took *Jerusalem* on a sabbath day, the *Jew* making conscience of defending themselves, because the law required their ceasing from all work; from whence *Agatharcides*, an heathen au thor, takes occasion to blame their law; if we find him carrying a grea numbe

ber of *Jews* with him into *Egypt*, yet withal we find him treating
with as much kindneſs as the *Macedonians* themſelves, appointing
ſt places in *Egypt* and *Lybia* for their habitation.

we find that powerful princes, ſuch as *Antiochus*, *Epiphanes*, and
others of his ſucceſſors, broke the power of the *Jews*, profaned
temple, and forced great numbers of them to abjure their religon;
e ſee them alſo at the ſame time giving the higheſt inſtances of an
ovable conſtancy and courage in defence of their law, and in en-
g the moſt exquiſite tortures; we ſee others of them encouraged
the love of their country, as well as religion, putting themſelves
a poſture of defence, purifying the temple, and celebrating a feſti-
which is obſerved even at this day, and laſtly obtaining favourable
es at the hands of their enemies; as may be ſeen in the books of
Maccabees, and in the twelfth book of *Joſephus*'s *Antiquities:* yea,
ind their name and glory at that time ſpread as far as *Lacedæmon*,
which commonwealth they made an alliance during the high-
hood of *Onias*.

ne ſees them after this ſo conſiderable, under the ſucceſſor of *An-*
s their perſecutor, that even thoſe kings ſue for their alliance with
preſents.

ne ſees that *Ptolemy Philometor* granted to *Onias* the ſon, leave to
a temple in *Egypt*, for the convenience of thoſe *Jews* whom *Pto-*
the ſon of *Lagus* had carried thither, as well as for thoſe who left
country for the oppreſſion of the *Seleucidæ*; for *Judea*, being ſituate
een *Syria* and *Egypt*, was ordinarily the theatre of war between
two ſtates. It is here worth our noting, that the *Jews* undertook
uilding of the temple in *Egypt*, as thinking themſelves authoriſed
at prophecy, *Iſai.* xix. 24. it being a thing otherwiſe forbid by
w.

ne ſees, in the ſame prince's reign, a great conteſt between the *Sama-*
s and the *Jews*, about the pre-eminence of their temples, at *Jeru-*
and mount *Garizim*, decided by him in favour of the *Jews:* on
h occaſion the *Jews* ſhewed that prince their law, and acquainted
with the ſeries of their hiſtory, to confute the *Samaritans* preten-

ne ſees after this, when the *Jews* had conferred the ſovereignty and
-prieſthood on *Simon*, that their ſtate became ſo powerful, that un-
Hyrcanus his ſucceſſor they were in a condition to attack their ene-
in *Syria*, and compel the *Edomites* to admit circumciſion. *Ariſto-*
his ſon was crowned; his brother ſucceeded him in the royal dignity,
eft the ſtate in a flouriſhing condition, notwithſtanding the civil
foreign wars he was engaged in.

e find afterwards, that the inteſtine diviſions among the ſucceſſors
oſe *Jewiſh* princes did by degrees open a gap for foreign power
ter, and prevail over them: *Pompey*, ſiding with *Hyrcanus*, took *Jeru-*
, and made the *Jews* tributary to the *Romans*, but without chan-
any thing in their religion.

lius Cæſar a while after beſtowed the kingdom of *Judea* upon *He-*
ne *Edomite*. *Auguſtus* after him uſed the *Jews* with the ſame equity
mpey before him had done, as appears from one of his declarations
publiſhed

publiſhed in favour of the *Jews* of *Egypt* and *Aſia*, recorded by *Joſeph*
This *Herod* and *Auguſtus* are the ſame under whom our Saviour Je
Chriſt was born.

It is evident, therefore, That the ſtate of the *Jews* has continu
diſtinct from other nations, and ſufficiently known, from the time of t
Prophet *Malachi* until *Herod*.

We may alſo truly aſſert, That whatever inclination the *Jews* of
had for the idolatries of their neighbours, yet we do not find them giv
that way during this interval, between the laſt of their Prophets a
Herod; as if the charge and command of that Prophet *Malachi* h
always ſounded in their ears, *Mal.* iv. verſe 4. *Remember the law*
Moſes *my ſervant*, &c.

One ſees that the *Jews* under the *Maccabees*, in great numbers, ſ
fered martyrdom, rather than abjure their religion; and that they o
ſerved the ceremonial law with all carefulneſs, of which *Auguſtus* hi
ſelf was witneſs.

One ſees that, under ſtrangers and heathen kings, they exempted the
ſelves from anſwering any ſuit at law on the ſabbath-day, from payi
tribute the ſeventh year, and preſerving the rights and privileges
their temple in ſpite of all oppoſition. Laſtly, one finds them, duri
Herod's government, ſupported by the favour of the *Roman* empire,
refuſing to ſet up the emperor's trophies, for fear leſt ſome ima
might be hid under them, which they looked upon as a crime agai
their law.

I am not ignorant, that ſince *Malachi* ſome hereſies ſprung up amo
the *Jews*, their commerce with the *Greeks* (who applied themſelves
philoſophical ſpeculations) having contributed to make them much m
diputatious than they were before. The authority likewiſe of th
kings, who were high-prieſts alſo, may have had a great ſtroke in b
miſhing the purity of their religion.

But yet the diſputes which we find amongſt them, as that of the
tality of events, did not at all touch the ſubſtance of their religion.

They no ſooner found the ſpirit of epicuriſm to creep in amon
them, but they framed ſuch additions to their public liturgy, as t
thought moſt proper to eradicate, or at leaſt condemn that corruptio

I confeſs alſo, that the Phariſees and Doctors of their law had grea
altered their morality, in making their own explications (by the gr
authority which they had amongſt the people) to paſs for authentic:
yet this change and corruption in their morals as to practice, did not
ſo far as to aboliſh the laws themſelves, which were only wreſted fr
their true meaning. This was indeed a great corruption, but not ſ
a one as could make it to be no more the ſame religion.

So that we may boldly aſſert (which is a thing very important to
preſent purpoſe) That the ſtate and religion of the *Jews* have contin
ſufficiently entire till the time of the appearing of the Meſſiah in
world, for their preſerving of whatſoever was neceſſary, viz. as well
books of the Old Teſtament, as the knowledge of thoſe oracles wh
foretold the coming of the Meſſiah, together with the knowledge of t
principles, according to which the Prophets have ſpoken in their p
dictions concerning him.

T

THE

PREFACE.

HAVE ſhewn in my Reflexions upon the Book of *Geneſis*, that the facts of the Creation, and the promiſes of the Meſſiah, are hs not to be queſtioned, and that the ideas of this Meſſiah con- ed vigorouſly all the time that preceded the children of *Iſrael*'s g out of *Egypt*.

Ve have ſeen afterwards, in the Remarks which I have made upon the ys which God gave to *Moſes*, that it was the great deſign of God to men in the expectation of this Meſſiah, and to take care that they ht certainly know him whenever he ſhould appear in the world.

have taken notice, in the third part of theſe Reflexions, of the care ch God took to give a great number of Oracles to explain particu- y all the characters of this Meſſiah, the place and manner of his h, the principal circumſtances of his Life, Death, and Reſurrection, to foretel the effuſion of the gifts of the Holy Ghoſt upon the *Gen-* , their call to the Religion of the Meſſiah, and laſtly, the overthrow he whole model of the *Jewiſh* religion and commonwealth, which no longer of any uſe after the coming of the Meſſiah, and the call- of the *Gentiles*.

My preſent buſineſs is now to ſhew, That in the books of the *New ament* we may find an exact accompliſhment of this whole deſign, rein God had with ſo much care inſtructed the world ſo long before; there is nothing more eaſy, if we will but take a little pains to read e books attentively, and to compare them with the model which God ſelf made, as we have hitherto deſcribed it.

'o make this truth yet more evident, I think it will be neceſſary to wo or three things, which ſeem to be very important for my pre- deſign.

nd firſt, I am to obſerve, that there appears a moſt perfect coherence veen the ideas of the *Old Teſtament* and thoſe of the *New*; which is lutely neceſſary, to ſhew that there is in theſe books a perfect unity eſign, notwithſtanding the vaſt difference there is between the *Jews* preſerve the *Old Teſtament*, and the *Chriſtians* who preſerve the *v*.

econdly, I am to demonſtrate that the ideas of the Meſſiah were very ng in the minds of the *Jews* at the very time that Jeſus Chriſt ap- ed in the world.

This

This was absolutely necessary, that they might not have wherewith t accuse those who received Christ for the Messiah, of being deceived i their choice, for not having had the exact ideas of the Messiah whic God had promised.

I shall upon this account shew in the third place, That when Jesu Christ did appear in the world, the model which God had framed in th law of *Moses*, whereby the Messiah might be plainly known, did ther subsist in the manner wherein God had framed it.

After this, I shall endeavour to shew by proofs, which are indeed un questionable, That in examining all the characters which the Prophet gave, by which the Messiah might be known, we cannot conceive more exact execution of God's design, as to the Messiah, than that whic we find in the person of Jesus Christ, whereof the books of the *New Testament* have given us the history.

Lastly, I shall shew clearly that this model which God had framed i giving the law, and in forming the commonwealth and religion of th *Jews* in so proper a manner, to make the Messiah certainly known, i not in being at this day; but that it was so destroyed by the total dis persion of that people, that we should not be able to know the Messia if he should now appear again in the world: and that indeed the prin cipal events, which according to the oracles were to follow the comin of the Messiah, are already come to pass in part, and do still come t pass every day.

I hope to evince these truths beyond all contest: indeed the bare read ing of the books of the *New Testament* plainly discovers the coherenc which they have with the books of the *Old*; it shews clearly that th ideas of the Messiah were at that time very strong in the minds of th *Jews*; and it supposeth, without any affectation, that the model whic God had made so necessary to distinguish the Messiah, stood at that tim entire.

In particular, it is certain, that the four Evangelists, by the relatio of unquestionable matters of fact, have proved that Jesus, the son *Mary*, is the Messiah which God had promised.

St. *Luke* shews, in the *Acts of the Apostles*, that after the resurrectio of Jesus Christ, and the effusion of the gifts of the Holy Ghost, th Gospel was preached to the heathens.

The epistles are a natural consequence of this vocation of the heathen and of the abolishing of the law of *Moses*, which the Apostles had under taken. They unanimously conspire to shew that God had resolved t call the heathens to partake of salvation, that the *Jews* for the greate part should be justly deprived thereof, because they obstinately rejecte the Messiah. Several questions are examined, which arose either fro the calling of the Gentiles, or from the abolishing of the ceremoni worship.

The succession of the history of the Christian church justifies, Th after the destruction of *Jerusalem* all people embraced the religion Jesus Christ, in receiving him for the Messiah whom God had promis to the Patriarchs and to the *Jews*.

I shall resume all these articles one by one, in that natural order which I have proposed them.

REFLEXION

REFLEXIONS

UPON THE

BOOKS

OF THE

NEW TESTAMENT,

TO

ESTABLISH THE TRUTH

OF THE

CHRISTIAN RELIGION.

CHAP. I.

t there appears a very juſt Connexion between the Ideas of the OLD TESTAMENT, *and thoſe of the* NEW, *the latter borrowing Light from the rmer.*

S it is not much the character of romances, even then when they are moſt tied up to the rules of probability, to borrow either ſtyle or ideas of thoſe authors from whom they take their ſubject, ſuppoſe that, in this my undertaking to ſhew that the *New Teſtament* n exact accompliſhment of the *Old*, it is very important to make that at the firſt reading of the Goſpels and Apoſtolical writings, one finds

finds in them a perfect conformity of ideas with the writings of th *Old Testament.*

One may to this purpose observe in general, that the Gospel suppose the Divine authority of the book of the Old Testament, as an unque tionable truth. The gospels and epistles have the same coherence wit the books of the law and Prophets which the writings of the latt Prophets have with those of the former, and which the books of all th Prophets together have with the books of *Moses*, and with the proph cies, laws, and histories, which are contained therein.

One may take notice afterwards, that all the books of the *New Testa ment* have an essential relation to those of the *Old*, in their most princ pal designs. I have shewed that their design was no other, than to rai men to expectations of the Messiah, and to paint *him* to the life who God had promised from the beginning of the world; and the only desig of the *New Testament* is, to prove that the Messiah is come according t the Prophets. The first speaks concerning the Messiah as expected; th latter, as already come.

But we must proceed to a more particular view of this matter. I s then, first of all, that the Christians have the same object of their fai which the *Jews* had; this Jesus Christ himself declares, where he saith *This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jes Christ whom thou hast sent.* Behold here the true character of the Chri tian religion, as well as of the Jewish, to believe one only God, to ow a Messiah, and to acknowledge that Jesus Christ is he. The *Jews* agr with us in the former articles, though they dispute the last.

I say, in the second place, that the laws of the Gospel, which regula religion and the conduct of particular persons in that society, are exact the same with those of the Old Testament. Jesus Christ, in his sermo upon the mount, which contains an abridgment of his ethics, had n other end but to restore the true sense and meaning of those laws Go had given upon mount *Sinai*; and though, in the matter of divorce it seems opposite to that law wherein God had before permitted then yet we may easily conceive that he began to abrogate those orders a dispensations which were only given to make the Messiah knownwhe ever he should appear.

The prayer which Jesus Christ taught his Apostles, is full of notio which reigned among the *Jews*, as several expositors have manifeste I shall content myself with alledging the instance of the petition for o daily bread, which has an evident regard to the manna which God ga the children of *Israel* in the wilderness for forty years.

We know also that the sacraments of the baptism and the euchar are originally Jewish ceremonies, which Jesus Christ hath applied, wi a very little variation, to much more important subjects. Baptism w a washing which accompanied the sacrifices and circumcision of pro lytes; and the washing practised under the law of *Moses*, signified th the proselyte who was admitted to the same, was resolved to renoun his former curses, and for the time to come to follow an opposite w of living, according to the rules prescribed him by the Ministers of He ven, after that they, in the name of God, had assured him of the remiss of his sins.

T

The euchariſt was an appendix of the feaſt of the paſſover, which ſerved the memory of the ſufferings of the *Iſraelites* in *Egypt*, and the iverance he afforded them, in puniſhing of the *Egyptians*. This emony did perpetuate the memory of the deliverance till the coming the Meſſiah. Jeſus Chriſt had ſubſtituted to this figure an inſtance the curſe of God againſt the poſterity of *Cham*, the idea of his death, which he had communicated his bleſſing to all nations of the earth cording to his promiſe; and he hath made it a more full and exact morial of his death, which he would have us to conſider as the death the true *Lamb, which takes away the ſin of the world*. As the old venant was made in the blood of a lamb, ſo Jeſus Chriſt, with regard the New Teſtament or covenant promiſed by *Jeremiah*, chap. xxxi. lains the celebrating the memorial of the blood he had ſpilt, *This is New Teſtament in my blood*, &c. And laſtly, whereas the law ordained commemoration of the paſchal lamb but once a year, Jeſus Chriſt ms to appoint a much more frequent celebration of the euchariſt, en he ſaith, *As oft as ye ſhall eat this bread*, &c. the reaſon of which, thout doubt, is taken from the greatneſs of the benefit which his death nfers upon us.

It is well worth our obſervation, that ordinarily the ſame propheti- ideas that are found in the *Old Teſtament* may be met with in the *w*. The book of the *Revelations* contains abundance of particulars down in the prophecies of *Zechariah* and *Ezekiel*. Jeſus Chriſt nſelf purſues the ideas of the Prophet *Joel* in the xxivth of *Matthew*, en he ſets forth the deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*; and afterwards he de- ibes the ſame, according to the notions which *Daniel* gives us ereof.

Daniel foretels, in the viith chapter of his book, the deſtruction of the *man* monarchy by the Chriſtians, whom he ſtyles *The People of the oſt High*. St. *Paul* follows the ſame notion, 1 *Cor.* vi. 2. where he ppoſeth it as a known thing: *The Saints* (ſaith he) *ſhall judge the world*. nd St. *John*, in the xxth of the *Revelations*, verſe 4, repreſents Satan und, and the government put into the hands of believers.

It is alſo very remarkable, that the promiſes and threats of Jeſus riſt are expreſſed in terms borrowed from the *Old Teſtament*. Theſe rds of Jeſus Chriſt, *He that hears my words, and believes in him that t me, hath eternal life, and ſhall not come into judgment*, &c. have not ey a plain relation to *Adam*'s unbelief and diſobedience, to the judg- ent he underwent, and the puniſhment impoſed on him? Is it not m this ſpirit, which penetrates both, that the *New Teſtament* ſo oft kes mention of a *new Canaan*, a *new Jeruſalem*, a *new name*, &c. and at glory is repreſented to us ſometimes under the notion of Paradiſe, metimes of a feaſt, where *Abraham* (who is called *The Father of the ithful*) ſits at the upper end?

Eternal damnation is repreſented to us under the notion of the valley *Hinnom*, of a lake burning with fire and brimſtone, with regard to e lake of *Sodom*, and to the place where the filth of *Jeruſalem* was not be burnt up and conſumed. It is upon this account that believers e exhorted to *remember* Lot's *wife*, *Luke* ix. 62. and and xvii. 32. and depart from the midſt of the wicked, *Hebr.* xiii.

If we consider the election of the Apostles, and of the seventy Disciples, we shall find the reference they have to the heads of the twelve tribes, and to the seventy elders whom *Moses* chose, to preserve the memory of the seventy souls *Jacob* brought with him into *Egypt*. Those passages, *Ye shall sit on twelve thrones*, and *your names are written in the book of life*, and the number of 144000, being the product of 12 times 12, by allusion to the twelve tribes, do all borrow their light from those ancient histories.

Throughout the *New Testament* we find nothing but a continual allusion to the state of the *Jews*: all those ideas of the *liberty of the sons of God* do allude to the ceremony of their jubilee. The *first born* mentioned there, and the *kingdom of Priests*, are not to be understood but by casting our eye on the *Old Testament*. If Jesus Christ be called the *chief Corner Stone*, if *Peter* be called *a Stone or Rock*, Believers *living Stones*, and the Apostles *Foundations*, it is by way of allusion to the manner in which the twelve princes or heads of the tribes did contribute towards the building of the temple, and to the manner of the building of it. If the children of *Zebedee* are called *Boanerges*, it is with reference to the second of *Haggai*, *Yet once, and I will shake the heavens and the earth*. That the Heathens are described as a people *afar off*, and what is spoken concerning the wall *of partition*, hath a visible respect to the *Gentiles* being prohibited to enter into the holy place of the temple.

If I would instance in all the mystical relations of the one volume to the other, I might say that there appears a singular conformity between them, even in those things which seem most opposite. *Moses*, the first and great minister of the law, had a stammering speech; *Zachary*, the father of St. *John the Baptist*, was struck dumb, when he was to pronounce the solemn blessing of the people; whereas Jesus Christ, on the contrary, hath this character given of him, that *never man spake like him*. God said at the beginning, *Increase and multiply*; he repeats the same to *Noah*, in order to the propagation of mankind, and replenishing the earth. Jesus Christ saith, *Go and teach all nations*; and the word is constantly represented to us as the seed of the regeneration and baptism, as the laver or washing whereby we acquire a new birth. We see *Noah* receiving the dove into the ark with an olive branch, as a sign of the peace of Heaven; and Jesus Christ receives a like token.

Fire falls down from heaven on the sacrifice of *Abel*, *Noah*, *Moses*, *David*, *Solomon*, and *Elijah*, as a token that God accepted their offerings; and God sends the same mark of his favour on the day of *Pentecost*, to declare that the sacrifice of Jesus Christ was most acceptable to him.

God had forbid the high priest to rend his clothes on any occasion whatsoever, that rending of garments involving a mystery, as appears from the history of *Jeroboam*; and yet we see, that the high priest rent his clothes at the condemnation of our Saviour, and thereby violated for ever the authority of his priesthood: whereas, on the contrary, we find the garments of our Lord and Saviour were left whole and entire, to signify to us the eternity of his priesthood. We see that the ear of *Malchus*, the high priest's servant, was cut off by St. *Peter*, and that Jesus Christ restored it again, to shew that the synagogue had lost the true faith, and Jesus Christ alone was able to restore it. We see the holy place in the

temple

ple opened at the death of Chriſt, by the rending of the vail; which ified that the ceremonial law was then to loſe its force and au- rity.

ut the obſervations already made are ſufficient to make out what I nd, without having recourſe to theſe myſteries; and I believe no n can make ſuch reflexions, without being perſuaded that ſo great a formity of ideas muſt neceſſarily imply a perfect unity of deſign: v it is impoſſible to ſuppoſe that this unity of deſign ſhould be ſo ſtantly obſerved by different authors, who lived at ſuch a diſtance of es, places, and intereſts, without being convinced of a perpetual vine guidance.

acknowledge that in the *New Teſtament* there may be found ſome iſions which ſeem wholly oppoſite to thoſe of the *Old:* for inſtance, find there a total abrogation of the ceremonial law; but, foraſmuch all thoſe obſervations had no other uſe but to diſtinguiſh the *Jews* n all other nations of the earth, and by this means to make the Meſ- h known to the *Jews*, amongſt whom he was to be born, ſo it is ob- us to conceive that all thoſe ceremonies were of courſe to be abo- ed after that the Meſſiah was come into the world, and that, if we ſider things in this view, we ſhall find no contradiction at all between *ſes*, who eſtabliſhed theſe ceremonies, and the Apoſtles, who aboliſhed m.

But, before we come to confirm theſe grounds, we muſt make it ap- r, that the ideas of the Meſſiah continued very freſh in the minds of *Jews*; and this ſhall be the ſubject of the following chapter.

CHAP. II.

at the Ideas of the Meſſiah continued very freſh in the Minds of the JEWS *at the Time of the Coming of our Saviour* JESUS CHRIST.

T would be an eaſy matter for me here to ſhew that the ideas of the Meſſiah were lively in the minds of the *Jews* before the coming of ſus Chriſt. This appears from the fable which the Rabbies told *igen*, concerning *Zedechiah*, and *Ahiab*, whom the king of *Babylon* rnt, for perſuading the *Jewiſh* women that they were the perſons that re to conceive the Meſſiah. But I intend to make uſe of proofs of a ferent nature.

Now, to prove that the notion of the Meſſiah was very freſh in the nds of the *Jews*, we need only take notice, that the promiſe of God ncerning him, was the firſt, the moſt important, and repeated with greateſt aſſiduity in the books of the Prophets; and conſequently it ployed them the moſt: God having, for this reaſon, obliged them to d the books of *Moſes* every ſabbath, to ſing the *Pſalms* of *David*, and

to examine the writings of the Prophets, where the promise of the Messiah was a thousand times repeated.

We may add a great deal of light to this observation, if we consider that the circumstances of the *Jews* at that time engaged them to give more diligent heed to what the Prophets had declared; and by weighing several matters of fact set down in the Gospel, to shew the universal effect of the lively impression of this notion of the Messiah on the minds of the *Jews*.

Without doubt the estate of the *Jews* at that time, being equally oppressed by the power of the *Romans* and that of *Herod*, could not but put them upon a careful examining of the promises which God had so often vouchsafed them concerning the Messiah; and the rather, because God had often represented to them the kingdom of the Messiah as a temporal kingdom, which was to deliver them from the power of their enemies.

This appears very evident in the Gospel on several occasions. We find that the people of *Jerusalem* and *Herod* were troubled at the news of the birth of *Jesus*, as that which would probably cause great troubles and desolations, before the kingdom of the Messiah could subdue the *Romans* as well as *Herod*: one sees that the multitudes would have taken Christ, and proclaimed him their king, and submitted themselves to him as the true Messiah; one sees that Christ's own disciples, both before and after his death, talked agreeably to these popular ideas. What else can we make of that passage of the mother of *James* and *John*, when she begs for them the chief places in his kingdom? When the Apostles dispute which of them should be the greatest, was it not an effect of the same cause? Did not the Apostles, when they went to *Emaus*, discourse at the same rate? Did not they express themselves with much grief and trouble, before they were instructed in the most sublime truths of the Gospel? *But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed* Israel.

It is also very observable, that *John the Baptist* appears and administers the sacrament of baptism at this time: this his practice gave the *Jews* occasion to take him for the Messiah; but what ground had they to think so? surely from what they had read in *Ezekiel*, chap. xxxvi. verse 25. And indeed, when the great council of the *Jews* deputed some persons to him, they charged them to know of him whether he were the Messiah or not; and if not, why he exercised a function which that prophecy seemed to appropriate to the Messiah himself, in calling him the Angel of the Covenant?

The same truth may also be collected from what is related to us concerning the opinions of the *Jews* about the person of Christ: *Whom*, saith our Saviour, *do people say I am?* And the Apostles answer, that some said he was *John the Baptist*, others *Jeremiah*, others *Elias*, and others again *that Prophet*, that is to say the Messiah, who is so called by way of excellence in the xviiith of *Deuteronomy*. And we find that when Jesus Christ styled himself *the Son of Man*, the multitudes easily conceived that he alluded to the seventh of *Daniel*, where the Messiah is so called.

We perceive also, from many other places in the Gospel, that the multitudes were very well acquainted with those passages in the *Old Testament*

t which were commonly applied to the Messiah: *The Messiah, when* ears, say they, *will he do greater signs than this man doth?* Others ffended because Jesus Christ was of *Nazareth*, arguing from thence ne could not be the Messiah; others maintain that, when the Mes- hould come, it would not be known whence he was; and others asserted, that the Messiah was to continue for ever: all which is vident sign that the ideas of the Messiah were very familiar among *ews.*

his must have been so of necessity, because the *Samaritans* them- s were possessed with the same ideas, though they had not so great an nt of light as the *Jews* had. They did not indeed altogether reject vritings of the Prophets, but rather studied them with care: their nosity against the *Jews*, and their jealousy upon account of the nise, of the place of the temple, and other things in question, do ifestly shew that the characters of the Messiah were known to them, that they were exactly informed in that whole matter.

One ought also to take notice, that as the Apostles call that *the ful- of time*, because the times set down by the Prophets were almost ex- d, and the sceptre was already departed from *Judah*, the weeks of *iel* were ended, and the kingdoms of *Syria* and *Egypt* were over- ed, so there were several good men who were filled with an expec- on of the Messiah. *Anna* and *Simeon* are represented to us as those , by their study of the Holy Scriptures, had discovered that the time he coming of the Messiah was near at hand; much in the same man- as *Daniel* is represented to us to have learnt from the prophecy of *emiah*, that the captivity was almost expired.

I shall add one argument more, which seems beyond exception; that ny persons were found, about the time of Jesus Christ, who were ei- r drawn by others into an opinion of their being the Messiah, or who themselves desired to be accounted so. Thus we are told that the terers of *Herod* the Great gave him the title of *Messiah*: of this mber were *Theudas* and *Judas Gaulonites*, with some others. Thus also, n after, some applied the prophecies concerning the Messiah to *Vespa-* the emperor, because he had been chosen in the east. This is at- ed by *Josephus*, *Tacitus*, and *Suetonius*, who assure us that the notion the promised Messiah, as of a great king, was very common in the t, and not unknown in the west.

We know that, under the emperor *Adrian*, *Barchochab* was the cause a terrible sedition, by making the *Jews* believe that he was the Mes- h: and we cannot be ignorant how many such like impostors have en since, who have abused the credulity of the *Jews*, even until *Sa- tai Sevi* (*a*), who deluded them about one and twenty years since.

Lastly, we cannot but think that this idea of the Messiah was always sh among the *Jews*, because we find that from that time they have ntinually disputed with the Christians about this matter; because they l us of two Messiahs, one the son of *Judah*, and the other the son of *oseph*; and because, in all places of the world whither they are scat- red, they speak of the Messiah in their Commentaries on the Scriptures, in

(*a*) *Rycaut*, Turk. Hist. vol. 2. p. 174, &c.

in their ſermons, in their public prayers, and their common converſation.

Surely if any time can be ſuppoſed wherein they might have loſt their knowledge and diſtinct hope of the Meſſiah, it muſt be ſince the time appointed for his coming is expired, when, by the Chriſtians inſulting over their vain expectations, they have been obliged (finding themſelves diſappointed by prophetical calculations) to ſet up that raſh maxim, *Curſed is he that computes the times*; and therefore it is evident, that theſe notions were much more lively in them when their hopes were well grounded, and when they might pretend to ſee them accompliſhed.

It is no leſs certain, that the model appointed by God, by means of which the Meſſiah might be certainly known, did ſtill ſubſiſt in the ſame manner as God at firſt had formed it: but that I may give a full light to this capital truth, I ſhall tie myſelf to conſider the ſeveral arguments for it diſtinctly; and ſhall begin with thoſe which ſhew that the commonwealth of the *Jews* did ſubſiſt according to the Divine model; and then proceed to others, which demonſtrate that God had therein preſerved all the diſtinctions neceſſary to his deſign.

CHAP. III.

That the Commonwealth of the JEWS *did ſtill ſubſiſt, and follow the Model which* GOD *had formed, in order to the certain Knowing of the* MESSIAH.

THERE are two things which ſeem to contradict this propoſition: the one is, the overturning of the *Jewiſh* State; the other is, the corruption of their religion: but it is eaſy to remove both theſe difficulties.

For the overturning of the ſtate of the *Jews* did not draw along with it that of the Scripture, and the laws on which it was founded, and afterwards governed; wherefore the caſe of this republic is not the ſame with that of *Athens* or *Lacedæmon*, which at preſent ſubſiſt no where but in books, becauſe there are no people now that follow the laws of the ancient legiſlators of *Sparta* or *Athens*.

But, on the contrary, we find the *Jews*, in all parts of the world, keeping theſe laws with great carefulneſs, ſtudying them with the greateſt application, and flattering themſelves that God will one day re-eſtabliſh them in *Judea*, which they expect by means of the Meſſiah, whom God at firſt promiſed to them.

It is now above 1600 years that they have been ſcattered throughout the world, and yet we find not that their condition has made them change their meaſures or hopes; and though they have already been deceived by a great

at number of falſe Meſſiahs, yet do not they for all that look upon condition of their commonwealth as irrecoverable.

ow, if during ſo long a ſeries of ages they have kept their laws ſo much carefulneſs, if they ſtill religiouſly obſerve all thoſe laws h could be kept without the bounds of the Holy Land; who ſees not hat in all probability they muſt have kept them more exactly at the of Jeſus Chriſt, and before his coming, when they could keep them much more eaſe than ſince that time, and that for many conſider- reaſons?

or, firſt, Their diſperſion then was in one only nation; whereas they are ſcattered amongſt Heathens, Chriſtians, and Mahome-

They had then Prophets, who exhorted them to the obſervance of laws, which now they have wanted for ſo many ages.

They had often princes that were very favourable to them, ſuch *rus* and *Darius*, who ordered that ſacrifices ſhould be offered for ſelves, in the temple at *Jeruſalem*; and *Pompey* afterwards had the inclination for them: whereas, ſince the time of their diſperſion, have ſcarcely met with any one prince who has been favourable to , if we except *Julian* the apoſtate; who, from an effect of his ha- againſt the Chriſtians, did vainly ſtrive to re-eſtabliſh them.

They had a temple, to which the whole ſtate of their republic fixed; *Herod*, about the time of our Saviour, had moſt magnifi- y repaired it: whereas now, for ſo many ages, they have neither le nor altar,

They had high-prieſts among them that were entruſted with the eign power, and were kings of their nation; whereas now they neither king nor prince of their faith.

Their laws being tranſlated into *Greek* ſince the time of *Ptolemy delphus*, it gave occaſion to an extraordinary jealouſy between the of *Egypt*, who had the text of Scripture in *Greek*, and between of *Jeruſalem*, who had it in *Hebrew*; whereas now, all this is ether ceaſed, all the *Jews* now, for many ages, making uſe only of *Hebrew* text.

nce, therefore, we find that they, without prophets, without king, f their own country, &c. have obſerved theſe laws for ſo many notwithſtanding their diſperſion throughout all places, and amongſt rts of people; how much rather may we conceive they did ſo ſince me of *Ezra*, who placed the books of the *Old Teſtament* in the or- which we have them at this day? There are only 542 years from me of the return of their captivity, which happened in the year , to the birth of Chriſt; and but 259 years from their return, to anſlation of the Seventy: and we know that above 1600 years are ſince their general diſperſion.

oreover, it appears that the *Romans* had ſo well preſerved the form *Jewiſh* government from *Pompey*'s time, as well as that of their on, that a *Roman* general ſent to demand a kind of permiſſion of *ews*, to let him paſs with the *Roman* eagles through *Syria*. We that thoſe eagles were never ſet up at *Jeruſalem*; but it was at a when a *Roman* commander intended to ſtir up the *Jews* to ſedition, and

and by that means to make the emperor their enemy. Yea, we find, that though the *Romans* reserved to themselves the power of the sword, yet they permitted to the *Jews* the judgment of zeal, against those whom they called Heretics, whom they tore to pieces, to execute the rigour of the law.

If we find that a *Roman* proconsul would not concern himself with questions of their law, arising without the bounds of their own country, how much rather may we judge that they enjoyed an entire liberty within *Judea?* And, indeed, we find the priests sending their commissioners to *Damascus* (*b*) against the Christians, without doubt with design to execute the law against impostors. St. *Paul* was beaten several times with forty stripes, save one, which could not be upon any other pretence but to obey the law in that matter.

These proofs are sufficient to make out that the commonwealth of the *Jews* subsisted still in the same manner as God instituted it.

And as for what concerns the overthrow of their religion, as God had interwoven the laws that regulated it, with those of their government, so that their religion was nothing else but a religious policy; it is evident that, their government continuing at the time of Jesus Christ, we cannot doubt but that their religion, notwithstanding the corruption which the Pharisees and traditionary *Jews*, whom Christ continually censures, had introduced, did still continue pure enough to answer the model which God had framed.

They rejected the *Samaritans*, as appears from the ivth of St. *John* and looked upon them as Heretics, having no commerce with them.

They lived in a perfect alienation from the Heathen: it is with this St. *Peter* begins his discourse to the assembly at the house of *Cornelius*. *Acts* x. 28.

They lived in an exact observance of the solemn feasts which God had prescribed them, viz. the passover, pentecost, the feast of expiation and of tabernacles.

They observed the feasts which their ancestors had joined to these upon extraordinary occasions, as that of the dedication, that of *Lots*; and some feasts which they kept then, as they do to this day. This appears by the history of the Gospel, and by the acts of the Apostles.

They assisted at these solemn festivals with much regularity.

They did not till their ground till the seventh year, according to God's command, which made the Heathen princes which were over them, to release them from paying any tribute that year, as may be seen in *Josephus* and other authors.

They taught the law in their synagogues, and that every sabbath day.

They were so scrupulous in their observation of the sabbath, that they accused our Saviour for healing the sick on that day.

It appears that lepers were sequestered, and that they observed the distinction of the several kinds of leprosy, according to the law of *Moses*.

We find, by the history of the *Gadarenes*, that swine were looked upon as unclean beasts.

(*b*) Acts ix. 4.

s certain that they paid the tribute which was appointed for the
the temple, according to the law of *Moſes*, and the re-eſtabliſh-
of that cuſtom, which we find II. *Chron.* xxiv. 5. *Joſephus* (*c*)
s that this practice was continued till the deſtruction of the temple.
neet with the ſame in *Tacitus*, and other Heathen authors of that

acknowledge that at the ſame time they were extremely corrupt in
doctrines, with which Chriſt upbraids the Phariſees and Sadducees:
his corruption reſpected rather their morals, than the externals of
religion; as appears plainly from hence, that Jeſus Chriſt upbraids
hariſees with their tithing mint and cummin, that is, with their
vance of outward niceties, whilſt they neglected the very eſſentials
ety.

ney held that Heathens could not paſs for their neighbours; from
ce it would follow, that God did not forbid them to bear falſe wit-
gainſt a Heathen. Hence alſo they concluded that it was lawful
em to kill their enemies; and this fomented their hatred and animo-
gainſt all other nations. It was on this account that the Diſciples
ſus Chriſt marvelled that he talked with a *Samaritan* woman.
heir deciſions concerning adultery were no leſs corrupt, which they
red to be no ſin, ſo long as it did not proceed to the outward act;
h opinion of theirs was more groſs than that of many Heathens,
had a truer idea of the purity of heart which God requires of us,
ll as that of the body. But yet this did not altogether deſtroy their
on, though it obſcured the excellency and ſublimity thereof.
for the Sadducees, beſides that their errors were only ſpeculative,
gſt the greateſt part of them, it is certain that what the Goſpel
of their denying the exiſtence of ſouls and ſpirits, and the doctrine
ne reſurrection, muſt be underſtood with ſome qualification, as the
ed have ſolidly proved, and, amongſt others, Dr. *Lightfoot* on the
els.

nd without repeating thoſe things which ſecured the preſervation of
ſtate, and which alſo viſibly tended to the preſerving of their reli-
I ſhall only obſerve, that the *Jews*, at this day, with very little
ence, are found in the ſame practices and opinions, as to their re-
n, which they had at the time of our Saviour.

eing, then, that after ſo long a time of ſixteen hundred years we
no greater change in their belief (though their traditions are con-
ably increaſed, the rules whereof they have infinitely multiplied, and
by increaſed this corruption), how can it be imagined that the reli-
of the *Jews* was wholly loſt, or had no being at the time of our
our Jeſus Chriſt?

t this therefore be eſtabliſhed as a certain truth, That the common-
th of the *Jews* ſubſiſting entirely, it was eaſy to know whether the
actions which were neceſſary to diſcover and make known the
iah, were ſtill found in the ſtate of the *Jews* and their religion.
is that I am now going to make out.

CHAP. IV.

(*c*) Antiq. xviii. ch. xii.

CHAP. IV.

That all the Distinctions necessary for discovering of the MESSIAH, *still continued in the State of the* JEWS, *at the Time of our* LORD.

I DO not know whether any man can deny that circumcision, which is one of the principal marks of the *Jews*, was practised at that time: if any one should dare to dispute this truth, we need only to represent to him, that the main dispute between the first Disciples of Jesus Christ and the *Jews*, was about the observation of this ceremony.

Neither were the *Jews* only obstinate in this belief; but we find also that those who first embraced the Christian religion, maintained that the Heathens themselves ought to submit to the yoke of circumcision, before they could enter into the Divine covenant, and enjoy the privileges of God's people, whom circumcision distinguished from the rest of the world.

One sees, that though God scattered the ten tribes, yet some of them still remained in *Palestine*, and were distinctly known as such. This appears from the *Acts of the Apostles*, where mention is made of a widow of the tribe of *Asher*; and St. *Paul* boasts of his being a *Benjamite*.

They upbraided *Herod*, notwithstanding he was their king, with his being an *Edomite*, and not originally a *Jew*.

One sees, that about *Tyre* and *Sidon* there remained still a distinct knowledge of the *Canaanites*.

It is known that *Galilee* was less esteemed than *Judea*, because many of the *Gentiles* were settled there, by which means the *Jews* of that province were obliged to some commerce with them; from which those who lived more distinct, thought that they had a right to undervalue those that were settled in *Galilee*.

One may also boldly assert, that all places were still distinctly known to what tribe they did belong. Thus it is observed that *Capernaum* was in the borders of *Naphtali* and *Zebulun*, that *Bethlehem* was in the tribe of *Judah*, which is related as a thing publicly known.

It is known that the priests still possess the cities which *Joshua* had assigned to them. *Zacharias*, the father of *John the Baptist*, dwelt at *Hebron* (*d*), a city belonging to the priests in the tribe of *Judah*.

One sees that even the *Samaritan* woman had a distinct knowledge of some famous places in the Holy Land, as *Jacob*'s Well, and the possession which he gave to his son *Joseph*; and that those of her religion took a prejudice against the *Jews*, because *Jacob* had built an altar at *Sichem*.

One sees that they kept up the practice of redeeming their first-born, which at this day is still observed by *Jews*.

As also the practice of polygamy, which was so common amongst them that St. *Paul* thought himself obliged to forbid the same to the pastors of

(*d*) Josh. xxi. 10, 11.

Chriſtian church, that he might aboliſh it by little and little
ngſt thoſe that embraced the doctrine of Jeſus Chriſt.
ne ſees, from the nineteenth of St. *Matthew*, that divorces were
cly practiſed amongſt them, as they are to this day.
one makes any reflexion upon the objection the Sadducees made to
Saviour, concerning the woman that ſucceſſively had ſeven brothers
ier huſbands, we ſhall perceive that the deſire of poſterity being pre-
inant amongſt them, was the cauſe of the continuance of this cuſ-
, which began in the time of the patriarch *Judah*.
Ve have elſewhere taken notice of the extreme carefulneſs of the
s, in preſerving the marks of their daughters virginity, which has
tantly continued down, ſince the coming of our Saviour Jeſus
iſt.
he Goſpel, which informs us that the *Jews* were deprived of the
er of the ſword, doth notwithſtanding ſufficiently ſignify to us, not
the extreme horror which the *Jews* had conceived againſt adultery
s we find Jeſus Chriſt upbraiding the Phariſees, that adulterers,
is, the greateſt of ſinners, entered into the kingdom of heaven before
n), but alſo that the laws againſt adulterers and adultereſſes were
rely executed.
ſhort, one ſees, that by a judgment of zeal, as they call it, they
ght a woman to our Saviour which was taken in adultery, before
went about to ſtone her; for one ought to know, that the law only
ected young women, who were defiled after a contract, to that ſort
uniſhment; becauſe, after they were once contracted, they were
ted the wives of thoſe to whom they were betrothed; and ſuch an
was ſhe of whom we read in the eighth chapter of St. *John*, and not
ſon actually married, whoſe puniſhment, according to the law, was
e ſtrangled.
ne ſees that St. *Paul* ſuppoſeth, that the law which ſubjected a
n to the will of her father, and gave him power to make void her
s at pleaſure, was ſtill in force.
will not mention here what the ancients tell us of the diſtinction
h they ſay was made between virgins and married women, as well
ie temple as in their ſynagogues; I ſhall only ſay, that this their
tion is not without ground.
is known that the order eſtabliſhed by *David* for exerciſing the
ly functions was exactly obſerved by them: *Zacharias* was of the
ſe of *Abia*, which was the eighth in order, as is mentioned
ron. xxiv. 11. and he offered incenſe according to the law, ſet down
. xxx. verſe 7, 8.
ne ſees that the *Jews* would not ſuffer the dead bodies to hang upon
roſs after ſunſet, according to what we find was practiſed at the
of *Joſhua*, in purſuance of that law which we find *Deut.* xxi.
23.
only mention theſe particulars now, intending hereafter, that I may
tedious repetitions, to enlarge more expreſsly, when I ſhall come
ew, as to every article, the exact accompliſhment of the ancient
es concerning the Meſſiah, in the perſon of our Saviour Jeſus
ſt; together with the uſe of theſe diſtinctions which bar any other,
except

except Jesus Christ, from attributing that title to himself, and fro abusing the credulity of the *Jews*.

It would be an easy matter for me to make a numerous list of the characters, according to all the different oracles which God gave to t *Jews* on this subject, and to justify the exact fulfilling of them in t person of Jesus Christ. And indeed it was not without cause that G furnished his people with so great a number of prophecies upon th head, his design being thereby to give us such solid grounds for our faitl by granting to it all these supports, that nothing might be able shake it.

But because all of them may be referred to certain heads, and that explication of the chief of them is sufficient to illustrate the rest, I sha stop there now.

I begin therefore with the character of the time in which the Messi was to appear, and in which Jesus Christ did actually come into t world. And it being utterly impossible for any man to choose the tim of his birth, any more than to choose an illustrious forerunner, or certain place where, or a certain family of which he is to be born, a much less of a virgin for his mother; these characters may satisfy u that all those that ever pretended to the title of the Messiah, could n reasonably do it.

CHAP. V.

That the Time pointed out by the Prophets for the Coming of the MESSIA *is the very Time in which* JESUS CHRIST *appeared to the World.*

I HAVE made it appear, in the third part of these reflexions, th the oracle of *Jacob*, Gen. xlix. 10. *The sceptre shall not depart fr* Judah, *nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until* Shiloh *come*, conta a formal character of the time in which our Saviour was to appear. am therefore at present to shew, that the *Jews* at that time had who lost the authority of which they had been possessed for so many ag which will most evidently appear from these four Reflexions on the hist of the Gospel itself.

The first is on the birth of Jesus Christ, which happened precisely the time when *Augustus* had ordered that all the subjects of the *Ro* empire should be enrolled; when we find that *Joseph* and the Bles Virgin went to *Bethlehem*, their own city, to list their names in register of the *Roman* magistrate, which is an authentic proof of servitude of that people to the *Romans*.

It will not be amiss here to take notice, first, of *Moses*'s number the people by Divine authority; secondly, of the numbering wh *David* undertook, and for which he was exemplarily punished by G Now, as God caused the people to be numbered, to shew that they w

ll his ſubjects, and as *David* numbered them with the ſame reſpect, ſo ve muſt conſider this action of *Auguſtus* was a public teſtimony of his overeignty over the *Jews*, who were ſubdued by *Pompey*.

When *Tertullian* appealed to the public regiſters of the *Roman* empire, n his apologetic addreſſed to the *Roman* magiſtrate who reſided at *Carthage*, he gave a ſufficient evidence that we have no reaſon to ſuſpect he relation of the Evangeliſts. One may join to this, the manner of he relation of theſe facts which the Evangeliſts give us; as, for inſtance, n the baptiſm of our Lord, they determine the years in which they were one, not only by the year of the high prieſt, but alſo by thoſe of *Auuſtus* and *Tiberius*, &c.

The ſecond reflexion may be made upon the character of one of the Apoſtles of Jeſus Chriſt, *Levi*, or *Matthew*; who, before our Saviour nade choice of him, was a publican: and it ſeems as if our Saviour had n purpoſe taken him from that employ, to be one of his Diſciples, to give a real inſtance, and ſuch a one as went every where along with im, that the *Jews*, by paying tribute to the *Roman* empire, had wholly oſt their temporal authority, which was to continue till the coming of he Meſſiah.

Here alſo may be made a third reflexion, which is very natural, upon paſſage related by the Evangeliſts. They come and aſk our Saviour, Whether it were lawful to yield obedience unto the *Romans?* For ſince God had choſen theſe people, and had given them judges and princes of is own chooſing, they had always an extreme averſion for any foreign omination: of this we have an illuſtrious example at the time of the iege of *Jeruſalem*, when, notwithſtanding the remonſtrances by *Jeremy*, et they could not conſent to ſubmit. This is that with which they are pbraided, *Ezra* iv. verſe 19. Neither were they more content with this heir ſtate of bondage, at the time of our Saviour; and ſome of their ealots took this occaſion to tempt our Saviour, that they might make im odious, which ſide ſoever he ſhould take. Their queſtion is, *Whether it be lawful to pay tribute to* Cæſar? To which he anſwers, with a Divine wiſdom, *Render to* Cæſar *the things which are* Cæſar's, *and unto God the things that are God's*; which words being joined with the money hat he made them produce, which was ſtamped with the emperor's mage, do evidently ſhew that the *Romans* were ſovereign lords in *Judea*: t is known that the coining of money is the undoubted mark of the overeignty of that prince who makes it paſs for current.

But if we muſt give ſome further light to the foregoing reflexions, we eed only obſerve the manner of our Saviour's ſuffering, as it is deſcribed to us. The *Jews* do agree, as may be ſeen in the *Jeruſalem Talmud* (*e*), that criminal judgment was taken away from them forty ears before the deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*; and the Goſpel ſuppoſeth the ame thing. The *Jews* did not put Jeſus Chriſt to death, but they carried him to *Pilate*, and demanded that he might be crucified. When *Pilate* ſaid, *Shall I crucify your king?* they anſwer, *We have no other king but* Cæſar; which confeſſion was the confeſſion of the whole *Jewiſh* nation, who were aſſembled at the feaſt of paſſover. In ſhort, one ees, that accordingly the *Roman* magiſtrate paſſed ſentence upon him. He was

(*e*) *Sanhedr.* fol. 24. 2.

was ſcourged before they led him to be crucified, which was a puniſh
ment amongſt the *Romans*. His body is not taken from the croſs but b
permiſſion from *Pilate*; and the *Roman* ſoldiers are thoſe dogs, that is
profane heathens, who encloſed him and tormented him, accordin
to the deſcription which *David* has made, *Pſalm* xxii.

The *Jews* have here but one anſwer to make, which God's forme
dealing with that people ſeems ſomewhat to countenance; which is
that as their ſeventy years captivity under the *Babylonian* empire di
not hinder the deferring of the accompliſhment of that prophecy of th
ſceptre's not departing from Judah, for ſome centuries after the ſaid cap
tivity, ſo neither is it neceſſary to ſuppoſe that the Meſſiah was t
ſucceed immediately upon the ending of the kingdom of the *Maccabee*
and upon the loſs of their liberty under *Pompey*.

But here is a very great difference; for, firſt, during the *Babyloni*
captivity, God ſtill preſerved amongſt them ſome form of government
the great lords of the country being chiefly carried away captives, whil
the pooreſt and moſt miſerable were left behind.

Secondly, the captivity laſted only 70 years, whereas this laſt di
perſion hath laſted above 1600.

Thirdly, the firſt captivity did not at all aboliſh thoſe neceſſary mark
whereby the lawful lords of *Judea* might be diſtinguiſhed; thoſe tha
were of the tribe of *Judah*, as well as thoſe of other tribes, were ver
well known, though they were not in poſſeſſion of the kingdom: wherea
now every thing is confounded amongſt them; and if one looks int
Chriſtian records, he may find that many of the kindred of Jeſus Chri
were put to death, becauſe they could pretend to the throne of *Judea*.

Moreover, during the captivity of *Babylon*, they had Prophets among
them who expreſsly foretold the end of it; whereas, nothing of tha
kind has yet been ſince the laſt deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, ſince which tim
no prophet has appeared amongſt them, that advantage being transferre
to the Chriſtians, ſome of which, who next ſucceeded our Saviour, di
foretel the moſt remarkable events that were to follow to the end of th
world.

But if any one ſhould be ſo nice as to call in queſtion the reaſons o
the difference here alledged; at leaſt the *Jews* will find nothing to objec
againſt the prophecy of *Daniel*, concerning the week at the end of whic
the Meſſiah was to appear, and afterwards to be cut off. In ſhort, if i
be true that Jeſus Chriſt was born under the empire of *Auguſtus*, it is n
leſs certain that he entered upon his miniſtry in the fifteenth year o
Tiberius, and was crucified the nineteenth of his reign, that is, in th
midſt of the four hundred eighty-ſeventh year from the twentieth year o
Artaxerxes, that is, before the end of the laſt week pointed out by *Danie*
as I have ſhewed in the eighth chapter of the third part of this book.

CHAP. V

CHAP. VI.

That JESUS CHRIST *had preciſely ſuch a Forerunner as the Prophets had deſcribed to precede the* MESSIAH.

ONE will eaſily judge that it was agreeable to the greatneſs of the Meſſiah, and the contemptible ſtate wherein he was to appear o the world, that he ſhould have a forerunner; accordingly, we nd *Iſaiah* expeſſing himſelf in this manner, the year of the world 3262, lmoſt 700 years before the birth of our Saviour. *Malachi* had expreſsly oretold the ſame in his prophecy, about 420 years before his appearance. f this be once granted, it is eaſy to conceive that the ſon of a prieſt, ving without any worldly ſplendor, and dying a violent death, though ery glorious for him, was a proper forerunner to that Jeſus who imſelf was to be crucified.

Our buſineſs therefore is to inquire whether the characters which the rophets give to the forerunner of the Meſſiah, do agree with *John the aptiſt*, in whom the Chriſtians maintain that this prophecy of *Malachi* as fulfilled. This may be eaſily made out.

Firſt, *John the Baptiſt* was miraculouſly conceived, at a time when his arents could not promiſe themſelves any ſuch thing: the angel *Gabriel*, ho had declared to *Daniel* the coming of the Meſſiah, by pointing out o him the number of weeks, was the meſſenger of the conception of this rerunner of the Meſſiah. Several things paſſed at his birth, and at the me when they gave him his name, which were very ſtrange, and which ould not but be generally known, as well becauſe of the accident which appened to *Zacharias* in the temple, as of his quality, being a prieſt.

Secondly, the extraordinary life which St. *John* led, being a *Nazarite*, ught to be carefully conſidered. He lived in a ſolitary place, as the rophet *Elijah* did before him.

Thirdly, his preaching alſo had the character of that ancient Prophet, ing thundering, as his was: he neither ſpared great men, nor thoſe who id the reputation of the greateſt ſanctity; as the Phariſees particularly, hoſe pride and hypocriſy he touched to the quick.

Fourthly, he ſet forth the coming of the Meſſiah as at the door; *The ngdom of heaven*, ſaid he, *is at hand*; alluding to the ſeventh of *Daniel*, here the kingdom of the Meſſiah is repreſented as a kingdom which as to come down from heaven, whereas the former empires had their ſe from the earth.

In ſhort, nothing could be more illuſtrious than the miniſtry of this eat man.

He baptized publicly, for the ſpace of one year, ſuch as came to him, lemnly engaging them to repentance, in hopes of the ſudden appear-ce of the Meſſiah. This ceremony, which was an imitation of their ſtom of initiating proſelytes in the *Jewiſh* religion, was plainly an ay to eſtabliſh a new religion, or at leaſt to reform thoſe corruptions hich time had introduced into the *Jewiſh* religion.

In a word, we find him so generally followed, that the great coun of the *Jews* thought fit to send deputies to him, to know whether were not the Messiah they expected: this great man was so far fro abusing the great credit he had gained, that he solemnly protested th he was only the forerunner of the Messiah, who was already come, b was as yet concealed in the midst of them.

His glory became so illustrious, that it stirred up jealousy in the mi of *Herod*, who cast him into prison, and at last caused his head to cut off in the castle of *Macherom*, to satisfy the lewd *Herodias*, wh marriage, or rather incest, with *Herod*, he had reproved.

Before St. *John* was beheaded, he sends his Disciples to Jesus Chri to inform himself whether he were the Messiah; which our Savio proves to them by the miracles which he wrought in their presence, a by the testimony of the Prophet *Isaiah*, which St. *John* had befo alledged as a proof of his call.

All these facts were so illustrious, and so well known, that St. *Jo* constantly passed for a great Prophet amongst the *Jews*, the Pharise themselves not daring to question it: he received public deputatio from the *Jews*, who demanded the reason of his ministry; and he hi self sent one to Jesus Christ, that his Disciples might be acquainted wi him, and that they might give him a second public testimony; and l of all, he dies a glorious martyr for his purity, after he had made a v number of Disciples, who were so well dispersed in all places, th St. *Luke* tells us, in the *Acts*, that some of them were found in *Asia*, w received the Gospel and the gifts of the Spirit, in which they had be as it were initiated already by the baptism of St. *John*.

It appears afterwards that St. *John* was looked upon as the forerunn of the Messiah: Jesus Christ saith he was the greatest of all the Pr phets; and when *Herod* heard of the reputation of Jesus Christ, he su posed that St. *John* was raised from the dead.

The *Jews* not conceiving that *John the Baptist* was the forerunner the Messiah, because they understood the prophecy of *Malachi* literally(which also make the LXX add to the text the word *Thisbite*, in that pa sage of *Malachi*; therefore Jesus Christ declares, that it was indeed of whom *Malachi* had spoken.

I acknowledge that *John the Baptist* did not do any miracle; but th he uttered, 1. so plain an oracle concerning the miraculous effusion the gifts of the Holy Ghost upon the Disciples, that we find nothing great or so clear in all the ancient prophecies: *He that comes after m* saith he, *shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire.*

2. He gave a second oracle, though not so plain as the former, co cerning the destruction of *Jerusalem*: *Whose fan is in his hand, and he w thoroughly purge his floor, and will burn up the chaff with fire.*

These two oracles contain the end of the old dispensation, and t beginning of the new: the miraculous gifts of the Spirit were given facilitate the publishing of the Gospel among the *Gentiles*; and t destruction of *Jerusalem*, and of the temple, happened as well to puni the crime which the *Jews* had committed when they put the Messiah deat

(*f*) Mal. iv. 5.

eath, as to take away all their pretences of believing that the Messiah as not come, who was to appear whilst that temple stood.

But, before I conclude this chapter, I must observe three or four things, hich are very necessary to confirm the authority of the testimony which is forerunner of the Messiah hath given to Jesus Christ.

It is a maxim amongst the *Jews*, that he who is acknowledged for a rophet, may confirm the authority of another, by attesting him to be true Prophet(*g*). And this is that which St. *John* did to Christ; he as generally accounted a Prophet, and he attested that Jesus Christ as so. This was that which confounded the elders of the *Jews*, when ey demanded of our Saviour, By what authority *John* acted? Jesus hrist answered their question with another, Whether St. *John* had a all from God?

The first observation therefore is, That we cannot accuse him of act-ng underhand with Jesus Christ, for we do not find any correspondence ept up between them: one of them was the son of a priest, the other f a carpenter's wife; the one dwelt in *Judea*, the other in *Galilee*; the ne concealed himself, whilst the other's reputation had got him a great any Disciples. The Disciples of the one were very jealous of the Disciples of the other, and endeavoured to inspire their master with the alousy that possessed themselves.

The second is, That the Disciples of Jesus are the persons that wrote ne history of *John the Baptist*, which they do as those who were con-erned for his glory and reputation; though at first they did not stand in ne least by him, but rather by that means inflamed *Herod*'s hatred gainst them, who contributed to the death of St. *John*, as well as of esus Christ.

The third is, That when St. *John* was beheaded, who never had any orrespondence with Jesus Christ, it is extravagant to conceive, that the Disciples of Jesus Christ should have forged the testimony which they say his great man gave to Christ, because this would have been to employ ne authority of a man who, never having wrought any miracles, and eing long since beheaded by the order of *Herod*, seemed to be quite orgotten.

The fourth is, That it is not probable that they could ever entertain design of imposing on the world in such a manner as this, which related o public facts known to all *Judea*, to all the priests, yea, to the whole ation assembled at their public feasts, to *Herod* the king, and to ne Disciples of *John* themselves, who would not have been wanting to efute and convince them; whereas, on the contrary, we see, that by the isposition which St. *John* had wrought in them, they were easily won o the faith of Christ. This is evident, from the example of *Apollos*, a Disciple of *John the Baptist*'s Disciples, who became afterwards so ex-ellent a preacher of the Christian religion.

(*g*) *Maimond.* de fundam. legis.

CHAP. VII.

That JESUS CHRIST *was born of the Family of* DAVID, *then reduced to mean Condition, as had been already foretold by the Prophets.*

WE have considered the time in which our Saviour was to b born; let us now speak of the family from whence he was t proceed. It has been proved already, that this promise was made t the family of *David* by *Nathan* the Prophet, II. *Sam.* vii. 12. I *Chron* xvii. 11. in the year of the world 2959. *David* repeats this his hope *Psalm* lxxxix. 4. and *Psalm* cxxxii. 11. And about the year of th world 3292, the Prophet *Isaiah* adds further, that the Messiah shoul be in a despicable condition.

There are four things which fully confirm this truth.

The first is, the kindred which was between *Elizabeth* and the Blesse Virgin, whence it appeared that her relations were of the tribe o *Judah*, and that she was known to be of the family of *David*.

One ought to observe here a thing, which though at first sight seem to be of small importance, yet we cannot but think that St. *Luke* wrot it without design; and that is, the journey of the Blessed Virgin to on of the cities of *Judah*, after her conception, to visit *Elizabeth* her kins woman, the wife of *Zachariah*, and the mother of *John the Baptist*. shall not mention at present any other reasons of this journey, which ma seem to be worthy of the Divine wisdom; and so I shall only observe a present, that this visit was made to *Elizabeth* in a city of *Judah*, whic is a demonstrative proof that Jesus Christ was of the family of *David* and consequently of that of *Judah*; so that this is far from being mad use of as an objection against it, as some have done.

It is well known, that the priests had leave to take a wife of what trib they pleased: but who sees not at first sight, that it was natural for a priest, dwelling in one of the cities of *Judah*, to marry in that trib amongst whom he lived; besides that the priests had of a long tim affected to make alliances with that tribe, before any other?

The second thing which ought to be joined to this, is, the manne of *Elizabeth*'s expressing herself to the Blessed Virgin, considering her a bearing the Messiah in her womb; and upon this account she called he *the Mother of my Lord*, alluding to *Psalm* cx.

The third is, that the Blessed Virgin, in her song, where she speak of herself as the person in whom the promise made to *Abraham* wa accomplished, *Luke* i. verse 54, 55. which promise concerned th Messiah, sets forth herself as heiress to the kings of *Judah*, an chosen before any of her ancestors, notwithstanding all their glory *He hath put down*, saith she, *the mighty from their seats, and hath exalte them of low degree.*

The fourth is, that *Zachariah* the priest, who was well acquainte with the Blessed Virgin, at whose house she had been during the firs three months of her being with child, and who could not be ignoran

her lineage, always owned her to be of the family of *David*. It is evi-
nt that he looked upon the Bleſſed Virgin as the mother of the Meſſiah,
s well as *Elizabeth* his wife. He ſeems to have conſidered the infant
iat was to be born of her, as the Redeemer promiſed to *Abraham*, and
ie Bleſſed Virgin as the heireſs of *David*; and therefore ſaith, *That*
od had raiſed up an horn of ſalvation for us in the houſe of his ſervant Da-
id. There can be nothing more convincing than this obſervation; for,
rſt, *Zachariah* was a prieſt, that is, one of thoſe to whom the care of
ie genealogies of the *Jews* was committed. 2. He appears to have
een very well verſed in the prophecies which fixed the Meſſiah to the
mily of *David*. 3. He conſidered his ſon as the forerunner of the Meſ-
ah, when he propoſed that the oracle of *Malachi* ſhould be fulfilled in
iat ſon whom God had ſo miracuouſly beſtowed upon him. 4. He
eeded only have examined the agreements of her marriage, and he
vould then certainly know whether the Bleſſed Virgin was not of ano-
her tribe, which would have cured him of any poſſible illuſion.

In ſhort, St. *Luke* obſerves very exactly, that this journey of the Vir-
in to her kinſwoman, and all the circumſtances which prove the Bleſſed
Virgin to have been of the family of *David*, were things well known
hroughout all the hill-country of *Judea*, that it might not be pretended
hat this important fact was any ways obſcure.

But, ſecondly, this genealogy of Jeſus Chriſt is carried up to *David*
nd *Judah*; and it is viſible that this was a thing exactly known, eſpe-
ially ſince Jeſus Chriſt always paſſed for the ſon of *David*, blind men
hemſelves calling him ſo.

A third thing to be conſidered is, the Bleſſed Virgin's going to *Beth-*
ehem, to be there enrolled, according to the decree of *Auguſtus Cæſar*.
There had been ſeveral numberings of the people; the firſt was at the
ppointment of God himſelf; the ſecond was by an order from *David*;
nd in both, an exact diſtinction was made between the tribes themſelves,
nd the families of each tribe: and one ſees that the ſame was obſerved
n this laſt regiſter, which was made by *Auguſtus*'s decree in the 4000th
ear of the world.

Joſeph and *Mary* went up to *Bethlehem*, which was the ſeat of *David*'s
family: nothing appears here of deſign or affectation: they made no
ſtay at *Bethlehem*, and the occaſion that brought them thither was abſo-
lutely ſtrange and unlooked for; and yet it was certainly an accompliſh-
ment of that prophecy of *Micah*, chap. v. verſe 2. *But thou*, Bethlehem
Ephratah, &c.

This remark upon the decree of *Auguſtus* is of great moment, becauſe
thereby the Virgin's being of the family of *David* appears to be the moſt
indiſputable truth in the world, as having been owned firſt by the whole
family of *Judah* for three months; ſecondly, by the genealogy which
ſubſiſted entire, as the *Talmudiſts* themſelves grant in the treatiſe *de Spon-*
ſal. chap. iv. ſect. 5. where they teſtify that the genealogy of the royal
family was without difficulty; thirdly, by the public teſtimony of all
their kindred, who met in a body before the *Roman* magiſtrate.

The fourth remark is, that when *Herod* knew of the birth of the
Meſſiah at *Bethlehem*, where, by the confeſſion of the *Jews*, he was to be
born, he would have involved Jeſus Chriſt in the maſſacre which ſwept
away

away the innocent children, if the same Providence which brought him to *Bethlehem*, to demonstrate that he was of the house of *David*, had not withdrawn him from thence, to preserve him from that tyrant who was afraid of being cast from his throne by one of *David*'s heirs.

The fifth is, that Jesus Christ did not only often allude to the place of his birth, in calling himself *the Bread come down from Heaven*, the word *Bethlehem* signifying the House of Bread, but he constantly owned himself for the son of *David*. Upon this it is that he grounds the objection which he makes to the *Jews*; *How is it that* David *calls the Messiah his Lord?* And indeed this fact was so constantly owned by all, that even persons who were possessed with devils did not dispute it, as may be seen in the Evangelists.

The sixth is, that though two of the Evangelists set down the genealogy of our Saviour with some difference, yet the *Jews* never took occasion from thence to question Jesus Christ's descent from *David*; his Apostles always building on that foundation; which may be seen as a thing taken for granted in St. *Peter*'s sermon, *Acts* ii. and in the epistles of St. *Paul*, where we find our Saviour always stiled *the Son of* David according to the flesh.

To these already mentioned we may add the three following observations. The first is, that if the genealogy of our Saviour had not been distinctly known, the Apostles would never have troubled themselves to have set it down; much less would they have placed it in the front of their books, as knowing that the beginnings of books are always more examined than the ends, and would certainly be so by a people who always stuck very close to their genealogies. In short, either the genealogies of the *Jews* were at that time as confused as they are at present, and so they could not have served as characters to discover the Messiah by; in which case the Apostles would have contented themselves to have hinted that Jesus Christ always passed for the son of *David*, as they have done in several places of their writings, without giving us the whole series of his pedigree; or else they were at that time distinctly known, in which case it was the easiest thing in the world to have confuted them.

The second is, that the differences which are found between the genealogy of Jesus Christ set down by St. *Matthew*, and that by St. *Luke*, is so far from giving us an occasion to doubt of the Apostles faithfulness in this matter, that indeed it is a new proof of their exactness in a matter of so great importance; for it can scarcely be imagined but that, in so long a series of ages, there must have been some of the ancestors of our Saviour in which that law took place, which obliged the younger brother to marry the widow of his elder brother deceased without issue, and so to raise up seed to him, which gave occasion to a genealogy not natural, but legal, the children bearing the name of the deceased elder brother, and possessing his estate. Now the Evangelists have set down both these genealogies exactly, which is an invincible argument of their care and fidelity.

The third is, that it was so much the more necessary to make this remark in the genealogy of the Messiah, because, as we have observed elsewhere, it was with relation to the desire of giving birth to the Messiah, or of having children which might live under his empire, that God

at

firſt permitted this kind of inceſt with the widow of a deceaſed bro-
er, which otherwiſe was ſo ſeverely prohibited by the law.

As to the low eſtate to which the family of *David* was then reduced,
is viſible that *David* and *Solomon* reigned with great glory; but *Rebo-*
am ſucceeding them, ten tribes fell from him to *Jeroboam*, in the year
the world 3029; and the poſterity of *Rehoboam* was afterwards de-
roned by *Nebuchadnezzar*, who carried *Zedechiah* the king into capti-
ty in the year 3416.

After their return from captivity, they were entirely thruſt from the
rone: the prieſts at firſt governing that nation; the *Maccabees*, who
ere of the family of *Levi*, reigning in *Judea*, from the return of the
ptivity of *Babylon*, until *Herod* the *Edomite*, who was made maſter of
udea by the favour of the *Romans*.

2. The family of *David* was at that time removed from their ancient
at, and was now fixed at *Nazareth*, where Providence ſeems to have
moved them from *Bethlehem*, to take away that object of *Herod*'s jea-
uſy, which would have offended him; as we ſee it did, when the wiſe
en acquainted him with the birth of Jeſus, which obliged him to make
diligent inquiry after the place where the Meſſiah was to be born;
hat Meſſiah whom he conceived to be a prince, who would rob him of
he ſovereignty to which he was raiſed.

In the third place, the Bleſſed Virgin was betrothed to a carpenter.
uſtin Martyr tells us that Jeſus Chriſt made ploughs. See what the
eirs of the kings of *Judah* were reduced to.

Fourthly, when ſhe came to *Bethlehem*, ſhe lodged in an inn, her kin-
red being not in a condition to afford her better accommodation.

It appears that the Divine Providence was very careful in executing
his deſign. There were ſome decays of the family of *David*, which
he Bleſſed Virgin expreſſes in her ſong. She was deſcended from the
ounger brothers of depoſed princes, and reduced to a private ſtate: ſhe
peaks of nothing but of lowneſs and meanneſs, not only in a way of
umility, but to demonſtrate the fulfilling of the prophecy concerning
he throne of *Jeſſe*.

But that this might appear more evidently, and confirmed by the law,
s it was her duty to preſent her ſon in the temple after the ſeventh day,
vith an offering, ſo ſhe does not offer what is preſcribed to the rich and
vealthy, but an offering which is appropriated by God in the law to poor
people, as appears *Lev.* xii.

One ſees, by the marriage feaſt at *Cana* in *Galilee*, that the kindred of
Jeſus Chriſt were not very rich: their wanting of wine on ſuch an
occaſion was no great mark of plenty.

One ſees alſo, that Jeſus Chriſt frequently repreſents himſelf as not
having where to reſt his head: on the croſs he recommends his mother
o one of his Diſciples, and was himſelf maintained by thoſe who fol-
owed him.

CHAP. VIII.

That JESUS CHRIST *was conceived by the Virgin* MARY, *without any Operation of Man.*

AS this article is one of the moſt important of our religion, ſo it is well worth our attentive conſideration. We may take notice here, that, according to the obſervation of *Juſtin Martyr* (*b*), the fable of *Perſeus* took its riſe from the prophecy of *Iſaiah*. However, that prophecy being very expreſs, according to the tranſlation of the LXX, we are to conſider how it was accompliſhed. It will not be enough here to ſay, that ordinarily extreme poverty is a ſufficient bar againſt the ſuſpicion of adultery; and therefore we deſire the reader only to call to mind the obſervations ſet down in the ſecond chapter of the ſecond part of theſe Reflexions on the Books of the law of *Moſes*. For

1. Polygamy and divorces were very frequent in the time of Jeſus Chriſt, as appears from ſeveral paſſages of the Goſpel, where God was pleaſed to give us examples thereof.

2. God was willing to give us inſtances of his ſeverity againſt adultereſſes, amongſt which thoſe were reckoned who ſuffered themſelves to be defiled after they were betrothed. We have an example hereof in the eighth chapter of the Goſpel according to St. *John*, which I have illuſtrated in the fourth chapter of this fourth part.

3. It appears that the ſame laws which engaged parents to preſerve the virginity of their daughters, did continue, and were ſtill obſerved by the *Jews*, as well as thoſe other laws which conſtituted the body of their religion: when Jeſus Chriſt upbraids the *Jews* for having changed the true ſenſe of the law, yet he never reproaches them upon this account.

4. The relation ſet down in the eighth chapter of St. *John*, makes it appear that the waters of jealouſy ſtill retained their virtue; that which Jeſus Chriſt writ on the ground being probably nothing elſe but the curſes which the law denounced againſt the woman that ſhould violate her honour.

I have made it very evident, in the twentieth chapter of my ſecond part, what was the uſe of thoſe laws concerning the marks of virginity, to prevent any doubts that might ariſe concerning the ſame: it remains now to conſider the ſeveral paſſages of the Evangeliſts, and to ſee what proofs we can find there to confirm this point, that *Mary* was indeed a virgin when ſhe conceived Jeſus Chriſt, and how we may anſwer the objections which the enemies of Chriſtianity make againſt this truth.

The Evangeliſts tell us that this remarkable fact was declared by the Angel *Gabriel*, who had before foretold to *Daniel* the coming of the Meſſiah, and ſignified the exact time thereof. The conception of *Iſaac* by a barren mother, as well as that of *Samuel* and *John the Baptiſt*, had been already

(*b*) *Dial. cum Typh.* p. 297. Iſai. 5.

ready declared in the ſame manner; and one miracle ought to ſerve as preparation for the belief of a greater.

When the Diſciples of Jeſus Chriſt ſpeak of the fact, they ſpeak of it a thing known throughout all *Jeruſalem*, and which had no relation to eir maſter. Beſides, we know the jealouſy that was between the Diſples of St. *John* and thoſe of our Saviour.

But we have a further account beſides of the meſſage of an Angel to *oſeph*, after he had perceived that his betrothed wife was with child; r when he was ready to divorce her, either by expoſing her to the riour of the Divine law, *Deut.* xxii. 23. or elſe by exempting her from nat extremity, he is diverted from his intention by this warning from eaven. In all which we meet with nothing but what is very probable; or *Joſeph* expreſſes his hatred and diſlike, as conceiving her to be deauched, and was reſolved not to receive her, but by an order from eaven.

Moreover it is very remarkable, that we find all things recited in uch a manner, as it was neceſſary they ſhould come to paſs, on ſupoſition that the Meſſiah was to be born of a virgin of the houſe of *Dovid.*

For, firſt, we find this event appeared incredible to the perſon herſelf vho was deſigned to effect it, becauſe ſhe could not eaſily make the pplication at firſt.

2. It cauſed exceeding joy to the perſon who ſaw herſelf choſen by God to fulfil ſo glorious a promiſe, whereby the family of *David* was o be reſtored to its ancient luſtre. This is evident from the hymn of he Bleſſed Virgin; which if we compare with the *Pſalms* of *David*, we hall ſee that that family ſtill retained all the piety of their anceſtors, vith all thoſe ſigns of acknowledgment which an event of ſuch a nature ſid juſtly require.

3. It appears that *Joſeph* acquieſced in this truth, he who otherwiſe did ot ſeem very credulous, till he was inſtructed from heaven concerning matter ſo rare and difficult to be conceived. He retires for ſome time nto *Egypt*, and affords *Mary* and her ſon all the ſervice they could reaonably expect from him.

St. *Jerome* alledges three reaſons why it was needful for the Bleſſed Virgin to be betrothed to *Joſeph* (*i*).

1. That the original of the Bleſſed Virgin might be proved by the pedigree of *Joſeph*, to whom ſhe was related.

2. That, according to the law of *Moſes*, ſhe might not be ſtoned as an adultereſs.

3. That in her flight into *Egypt* ſhe might have the comfort of a guardian rather than of a huſband.

Neither can any thing be oppoſed to the belief of theſe matters, but ſome very weak conjectures: the firſt is, that her being contracted doth ſomething obſcure the diſtinct notion of virginity; and ſecondly, that the Bleſſed Virgin did always paſs for the wife of *Joſeph*, even according to the ſtyle of Jeſus Chriſt himſelf; and laſtly, that the relation which the Evangeliſts give of this matter, was not known till long after the death of Jeſus Chriſt.

But

(*i*) Contr. *Helvidium.*

But it is an eaſy matter to ſatisfy the mind of any reaſonable reader in this thing. It was neceſſary that the Bleſſed Virgin ſhould be betrothed:

1. To ſecure her life, which would have been in danger if ſhe had been delivered whilſt ſhe was reputed to be a virgin; for ſhe would have been accuſed of whoredom, and conſequently have been put to death.

2. It was neceſſary ſhe ſhould be betrothed, and paſs for the lawful wife of *Joſeph*, that her ſon might not be baniſhed from the congregation of *Iſrael*, as a baſtard, in the rigour of the law.

As for the other objection, I eaſily grant that the Bleſſed Virgin always paſſed for the wife of *Joſeph*: ſhe herſelf ſaith, *I and thy father ſought thee.* But withal, at that very time, Jeſus Chriſt unveiled that myſtery in the preſence of all the *Jews*, maintaining that he was the Son of God, in whoſe houſe he was at that time: it was at a ſolemn feaſt of the *Jews*, where the whole nation was aſſembled, and in the midſt of an aſſembly of their Doctors, that he declared the temple to be the houſe of his Father, as he afterwards conſtantly called it.

We find him, at another time, declaring the ſame in the preſence of his family at *Cana* in *Galilee*: *Woman, what have I to do with thee?* ſaith he to the Bleſſed Virgin (*k*); to put her in mind of ſome paſſages which could not but preſerve in her a very particular reſpect for him.

He gives yet a further degree of light into this matter, when, his mother ſeeking to come at him, he ſaith, *Who is my mother, and who are my brethren?* that is, kinſmen. It is probable that *Joſeph* was dead before our Saviour entered upon his miniſtry; however, his making no mention of his reputed father, ſhews how careful he was to avoid any thing that might obſcure his miraculous birth.

Laſt of all, it is very conſiderable, that this paſſage being not the only character which was to diſtinguiſh the Meſſiah from all others, but was to be confirmed by the miracles of Jeſus Chriſt, by his reſurrection, and thoſe other proofs of his Divine nature, it was at firſt not much inſiſted on, becauſe there was a neceſſity that it ſhould continue veiled for ſome time, upon the account of the frequent apparitions of Angels, and of God himſelf in a human form, that ſo the truth of his humanity ſhould be eſtabliſhed by his life and death, before the publication of his miraculous conception.

For it is certain that the Apoſtles preached up this truth, and that the Evangeliſts had put it in writing before the deſtruction of the *Jewiſh* commonwealth; and yet we do not find that it was ever conteſted. The Evangeliſts deſcribe the methods which the *Jews* took to make the reſurrection of Chriſt to be doubted of, and to ſlight his miracles; and do we think they would not as well have given us the objections of the *Jews* againſt a thing of which till then never any inſtance had been known in the world?

I know very well that ſome of the ancients have told us that the *Jews* were offended, that the Bleſſed Virgin, after ſhe was delivered of our Saviour, ſhould ſeat herſelf in the place appointed for virgins; and that, becauſe *Zacharias* the prieſt maintained her in ſo doing, he was thereupon

(*k*) John ii. 4.

reupon killed by them between the temple and the altar, with which Saviour upbraids the *Jews*. I know alſo that they affirm that ſhe s forced to confirm the truth of her virginity, by ſubmitting herſelf a ſearch of matrons: yet I cannot believe that ſhe ever underwent ſuch examination, of which the ſilence of the Evangeliſts, and St. *ke*'s in particular, fully convinces me; and therefore I am inclined to nk that no ſuch objection was ever made againſt her.

In the mean time, it is well worth our noting, 1. That the Bleſſed rgin had *Zachariah* the prieſt as an examiner and witneſs of her beha- ur from the beginning, at whoſe houſe ſhe abode during the firſt nths of her being with child, and who publicly divulged the miracu- is birth of his own ſon, and his leaping in his mother's womb at the utation of the Bleſſed Virgin.

2. That the Bleſſed Virgin lived many years after the paſſion of our viour, that ſhe might undergo and anſwer any accuſations of that ture.

3. That ſhe alſo had for witneſſes of the miracles which attended r conception, all the Diſciples of St. *John*, as well as thoſe of Jeſus riſt, though the Diſciples of St. *John* did not agree with the Diſciples Jeſus Chriſt.

4. That what ſhe declared of herſelf, was not a fact which had no ces whereby it might be examined in the *Old Teſtament*.

5. That the *Jews* had thirty years to examine the ſeveral particulars hich had relation to the Meſſiah, and the miraculous manner of his rth, at the time when ſhe publiſhed this particular paſſage of her life.

6. That we cannot call in queſtion the veracity of the Bleſſed Virgin the account which ſhe gives us of what concerned herſelf, of which witneſs could be produced, foraſmuch as the accompliſhment of that rt of her prophecy, that *all nations ſhould call her bleſſed*, clearly ſhews at ſhe had received the ſpirit of prophecy; no more than we can ſpect any forgeries in the relations of other Prophets, though we have other teſtimony concerning them, but that of the Prophets them- lves.

CHAP. IX.

hat JESUS CHRIST *lived and preached after the ſame Manner as the* PROPHETS *had foretold the* MESSIAH *ſhould do.*

I HAVE clearly ſhewn that Jeſus Chriſt was born of the poſterity of *Adam*, by *Seth*, by *Noah*, by *Abraham*, by *Iſaac*, by *Jacob*, by *Ju- ah*, by *David*, as it was foretold of the Meſſiah by the moſt ancient racles, the increaſe of which I have already taken notice in my third art.

I have afterwards ſhewed, that Jeſus Chriſt was born of a virgin, whereby

whereby those oracles, *The seed of the woman shall bruise thy head* (*l*), and *A virgin shall conceive and bear a son* (*m*), seemed to be clearly accomplished. Let us now see, according to those oracles, what kind of person the Messiah was to be, from his birth to his death, according to those ideas which the Prophets have given us.

Moses expressly tells us, *Deut.* 18. that the Messiah was to resemble him; *The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet like unto me* (*n*); which place, as I have observed before, has been so constantly applied to the Messiah, that it appears that not only *John the Baptist*, when he sent his Disciples to Jesus Christ, *Philip* speaking to *Nathanael*, and the Disciples when they were asked by our Saviour who he was, but also the *Samaritan* woman, understood it so without the least hesitation, and said, That when the Messiah should come, he would tell them all things.

In short, one sees an exact proportion between *Moses* and Jesus Christ; not only because our Saviour was saved in his infancy from the hand of *Herod*, and from a river of blood, like another *Moses*; or because *Egypt* served for a retreat to him, as *Moses* had hid himself in *Arabia*; or because he was rejected of his brethren, those of *Nazareth*, who would have thrown him headlong from a rock, because he declared himself to be the promised deliverer and Messiah, by applying to himself the words of *Isaiah*, *The spirit of the Lord is upon me*, &c.

Neither shall I now take notice of his being despised and disowned by his brethren, and called a *Galilean*, whereas indeed he was of *Judea*; for indeed the Messiah was to be treated as a *Nazarene*, that is, a contemptible person, and a man of no consideration: for we may find that because our Saviour was brought up at *Nazareth*, though he was born at *Bethlehem*, he was therefore looked upon as a person incapable of any thing that was great; *Can any good thing come out of* Nazareth? said *Nathanael* to *Philip* (*o*); and the Pharisees to the officers whom they had sent to take Jesus, *Search and look, for out of Galilee ariseth no Prophet*, much less the great Prophet, the Messiah, who by way of eminence is so called. It is upon this account that he was called a *Galilean*, not only by the Heathens, but by his own Disciples too; for the word *Galilean* seems to have been a name for one of an impure extraction, because many of other nations dwelt among the *Jews* in *Galilee*. But I shall take notice of several other more important resemblances between them, and such as have relation to the ministry of *Moses* rather than his person, by referring all to his preaching, his miracles, his predictions, and some other heads of that nature.

First, then, Jesus Christ, that he might at first maintain the character of the Messiah, appears in the temple. *John the Baptist* had heard him called the Son of God, by a very peculiar witness, a voice from heaven. Wherefore we see that, at his first entry upon his ministry, he drives out those that profaned the house of God, whom he called his Father, with a scourge; and this he did at the feast of the passover, before the whole nation of the *Jews* (*p*).

Here is another character of the Messiah; he was to begin the exercise of

(*l*) Gen. iii. 15.
(*m*) Isai. vii. 14.
(*n*) Deut. xviii. 15.
(*o*) John i. 46.
(*p*) John ii. 13, 14, 15, &c.

his miniſterial functions, in the tribes of *Naphtali* and *Zebulon*, accord-g to the prophecy of *Iſaiah* (*q*): and this our Saviour exactly accom-iſhed by his beginning to preach at *Nazareth*, which was in the tribe *Zebulon*; and he converſed much at *Capernaum*, which was in the be of *Naphtali*, according to the obſervation of the Evangeliſts.

But I proceed to conſider ſome circumſtances of his miniſtry. *Iſaiah* id foretold that the Meſſiah was to preach the Goſpel to the poor; hich Jeſus applies to himſelf in the ſynagogue at *Nazareth*, declaring at in his perſon that prophecy was fulfilled; viz. *The ſpirit of the Lord od is upon me, wherefore the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings to the meek*, &c. (*r*).

The choice which he made of his Diſciples from among the meaneſt the people, and the baſeſt of the crowd which followed him where-er he went, ought to paſs for a ſufficient accompliſhment of this pro-hecy.

The Meſſiah, according to the repreſentation which *Iſaiah* gives us of im, was to publiſh the tidings of the remiſſion of ſins; and was not his that which Jeſus Chriſt did, during the courſe of his miniſtry?

The Meſſiah was to preach the remiſſion of ſin, in ſuch a manner, s that he might dry up the fountain of it, at the ſame time, in calling hen to the ſtudy of ſanctification: this was admirably performed by eſus Chriſt; 1. In correcting thoſe abuſes which the *Jewiſh* Doctors ad introduced into the law; 2. In declaring that the effect of ſancti-cation was to be looked for in the heart, rather than in the eyes or ands.

One may ſee afterwards, 1. That he knew the heart of man; which roved that he made it. This he teſtifies upon ſeveral occaſions, in the nſwers which he made to thoſe that ſpoke to him, and indeed in all his iſcourſes, which were ſuited to the diſpoſitions of the heart of thoſe to hom he addreſſed them.

2. That he made uſe of parables, which are moral leſſons, very eaſy ndeed, but withal fitter for the ſubject than fables, and more worthy of God; parables, alſo, which were ſo ordinary and familiar amongſt the *Jews*, that we find moſt of them at this day in the writings of the *Jews*, hough they apply them to no other uſe.

3. That he deſcended to particulars, without uſing any thing mean, hich men are apt to do when they divide things minutely.

4. That he forgot no one precept of morality.

5. That he examined all the duties of religion, and made them infi-itely recommendable by ſuggeſting ſuch excellent motives.

After all, we are to conſider four things in the preaching of our Saviour, which will fully prove that he was the Meſſiah.

1. That his doctrine appeared to be wholly Divine: he had never been brought up at the feet of any Doctor; but had his breeding in a carpenter's ſhop.

2. That no crime was ever objected to him, notwithſtanding that he upbraided the Phariſees with theirs; but he ſupported his doctrine by he holineſs of his converſation.

3. That

(*q*) Iſai. ix. 1. (*r*) Iſai. lxi. 1.

3. That he insensibly disposed the people to receive him as the Messiah by the characters which God had given of him in the Prophets.

4. He prepared his Disciples and his auditors to expect that one da the *Gentiles* should enter into the church.

In short, can any thing be so surprising, as to see a man who had live thirty years as the son of a carpenter, to declare himself all at once Doctor, to preach publicly, to censure the Doctors of his nation, t speak of the law and prophets with more depth and authority than al that ever went before him? Who can, without surprise, conceive tha a man of the lowest quality should, from a carpenter's shop, come an determine questions about the law, and tread under his feet the autho rity of all the great Rabbins every where, only by an *I say unto you*, t that none was able to contradict him! Certainly, when one sees ou Saviour upon the mount explaining and defending the moral part of th law from the corruptions into which it was fallen, he appears not onl as great as *Moses* on mount *Sinai*, but even as God himself, when h published his laws to that his ancient people.

Neither ought any one to have less admiration for that perfect inno cence which shone through the whole course of his life. What crim had they to charge him with, when they put him to death, he who ac cused his enemies of so many? *Who of you*, saith he, *accuses me of sin*? We find him only accused of words ill understood, which they were re solved to misinterpret: his saying, *That if they destroyed that temple, h would rebuild it in three days*, was laid to his charge as a crime; and ye these words could not have been heightened into crimes, if they had beer spoken in the same sense which they put upon them. This was an essen tial character of the Messiah, who was to be the restorer of holiness according to the idea which the Prophets gave of him.

I should take notice afterwards that our Saviour, in his sermons, did by little and little dispose the minds of his auditors and Disciples to con ceive and believe him to be the promised Messiah. The first act of his public ministry, was an effect of his zeal for the holiness of a temple consecrated to his Father: he drove the buyers and sellers out of the temple, at the feast of the passover, which action of his was a solemn profession that he was the Son of God. Soon after, at *Nazareth*, he ap plies to himself that prophecy of *Isaiah*, *The spirit of the Lord is upon me*, &c. He explains himself yet more distinctly in *Jerusalem*, at the second passover, which he celebrated during the time of his ministry, that they might understand that he was the Messiah, according to the account which the Evangelists give us; and he explains himself yet more parti cularly upon *John the Baptist's* message to him. By which means this truth became already so illustrious, that the multitudes would proclaim him King, that is, publicly own him for the Messiah, and obey him as their rightful Sovereign. And lastly, he explains himself in this mat ter by a question, when he asked his Disciples, What censures were pass upon him in *Judea*, and what they themselves thought of him (*s*)?

In short, it is certain that Jesus prepared the minds of his Disciples to look for the calling of the *Gentiles*, which also was the character of the Messiah. *Jacob* had prophesied of old, *To him shall the gathering of* the

(*s*) Matt. xvi.

e people be (*t*). But I ſhall paſs by the oracles which foretel this mat-
r. What ſignifies the hiſtory of the prodigal, unleſs it be the calling
nd the return of the *Gentiles?* the eldeſt ſon (the *Jew*) being extremely
roubled at it. What means that ſaying of our Saviour, that *he had
her ſheep*, &c. or his prediction, that *many ſhould come from the eaſt and
eſt, and ſit down with* Abraham, *when the children of the kingdom ſhould
e caſt forth?* I ſhall take notice, in another place, of the frequent repeti-
on of ſuch like oracles, and their exact accompliſhment. Theſe are
ufficient at preſent to juſtify the ſolidity of this laſt reflexion, and the
ruth of this concluſion at the ſame time, that if one examines the life
nd preaching of our Saviour, he may find all thoſe characters by which
he promiſed Meſſiah might be known. Let us now proceed to the con-
deration of his miracles.

CHAP. X.

That the Miracles wrought by our SAVIOUR *clearly prove that he is the* MESSIAH.

AS the Meſſiah was to be very clearly diſtinguiſhed from all others by his miracles, and as the Prophet *Iſaiah*, chap. xxxv. ſets down he power of working miracles as one of thoſe characters by which he vas to be known, ſo it is of great importance to us, to examine the niracles of our Saviour with great attention, whether they have the haracter of truth, and whether they come up to the idea which the Prophets give us of thoſe wonders which the Meſſiah was to do.

The Evangeliſts, who tell us that he wrought almoſt an infinite num-er of them, have deſcribed more than thirty ſeveral ſorts of their. He hanged water into wine at the wedding at *Cana*; he healed the ſick ſon f a courtier; he delivered one that was poſſeſſed in the ſynagogue at *Capernaum*; he healed St. *Peters*'s mother-in law; he cauſed a vaſt num-er of fiſh to be caught; he cured a leper with a word, and with a touch he healed one ſick of the palſy; he cured a woman of an inveterate iſſue of blood, and raiſed the daughter of a ruler of the ſynagogue from he dead; he cured the impotent man at the pool of *Bethesda*; he cured him that had a withered hand; he delivered a poſſeſſed perſon that was blind and dumb; he recovered the centurion's ſervant, and raiſed to life he ſon of the widow of *Naim*.

Neither are theſe that follow any leſs conſiderable: he reſtores ſight o two blind men, he caſts forth a dumb devil, he aſſuages a tempeſt by his word, he delivers two poſſeſſed perſons, and permits the devil to go nto the herd of ſwine of the *Gadarenes*; he feeds above five thouſand per-ons with two loaves and five fiſhes; he walks upon the ſea, and calmeth a ſecond

(*t*) Gen. xlix. 10.

a second tempest; he casts forth a devil from a daughter of a woman of *Canaan*, who was possessed; he cures one deaf and dumb; he feeds four thousand persons with seven loaves; he restores sight to a blind man at *Bethsaida*; he casts out a devil, after his Disciples had in vain attempted it; he restores sight to one born blind; he cured a crooked woman; he cures one of the dropsy on the sabbath day; he raises *Lazarus* from the grave, after he had been dead four days; he heals ten lepers afterwards; he restores sight to a blind man at his entering into *Jericho*; and cures the lame and blind in the temple itself.

There are several characters which assure us of the faithfulness of the Evangelists in these their relations: 1. They wrote these things to convert the *Jews* before the destruction of *Jerusalem*. 2. They marked the circumstances very exactly; and none could be ignorant of them, since they all went thrice a year up to *Jerusalem*. 3. The facts which they relate were lasting, and such as might be examined. 4. They speak of facts which they suppose that Jesus Christ was willing should be beyond all contest, that they might be better examined. 5. They speak of those facts which they maintain to be the accomplishment of the oracles concerning the Messiah whom the *Jews* expected.

But there are not fewer characters of truth in the miracles of our Saviour, to buoy them up. The first is, that most of the diseases which Jesus Christ cured, are described as absolutely incurable: this observation is of great moment, as well to discover to us the infinite power exerted by Jesus Christ, as to make known the extraordinary wisdom of the Apostles, who being men without learning, did notwithstanding set down the symptoms of the diseases which their master cured, far beyond what might be expected from their natural capacities.

The second reflexion belongs to the subjects upon whom these miracles were wrought; for we scarce find any of them, except his curing St. *Peter*'s mother-in-law, to be wrought upon persons who had least relation to Jesus Christ: he heals the servant of the high-priest, the son of the ruler of a synagogue, the son of a *Roman* centurion, and several others.

A third reflexion may be drawn from the places where they were done, and from the witnesses that were present. In short, they were wrought in public places, in the midst of cities and synagogues; some in *Judea*, some in *Galilee*, some at *Jerusalem*, at *Naim*, *Sidon*, &c. they were submitted to the examination of the most implacable enemies of Jesus Christ, the people of the *Jews*, the *Samaritans*, and the *Gentiles*, who dwelt in *Palestina*.

One may add also, that these miracles were of very different kinds, wrought in several places, and with very considerable circumstances, at the most solemn feasts, the *passover* and *pentecost*.

One ought to consider also, that *Palestine* was full of those whom our Saviour had cured; and that all the *Jews* who came up three times in a year to *Jerusalem* could not but take notice of them.

One ought afterwards to observe, that Jesus Christ communicated to his Disciples the power of working miracles in the second year of his ministry, which none else had ever done.

And lastly, it must be observed, that these miracles were lasting; the three

ree dead men, whom our Saviour raised to life again, who were very ung, and who in all probability lived longer than decrepit old men, were the sight of all *Judea*; and other sick and infirm persons, that he had aled, enjoyed life and health. 2. In short, the relation of Christ's racles, which *Pilate* sent to *Tiberius*, sufficiently testifies that they re facts generally known; and, 3. That the certainty of them could little be contested, that the *Jews* rather chose to acuse him of doing em by some magical secret, than to dispute the truth of them.

These reflexions sufficiently confirm the truth of the Evangelists re- ion, and of the miracles of Jesus Christ. To agree to what has been d, we need not refute the folly of those who have compared the mi- cles falsely attributed to *Apollonius Tyanæus*, with those of Jesus Christ. ne hardly knows at this day whether ever there was such a man as *Apol- ius*; whereas, ever since the Apostles, there have been Christians who ve read the history of the miracles of Jesus Christ, and who have be- ved them after a due examination. Which of *Apollonius*'s disciples as ever so bold as to say to Heathens, as *Tertullian* did in the second ntury, in his Apologetic, *Bring to us what possessed persons you please, d we will heal them in the name of Jesus Christ?*

But we ought also to add one thing more, That these miracles of Jesus hrist were exactly such as ought to have been made, to prove him to the Messiah.

1. They were exactly such as *Isaiah* had foretold concerning the essiah, chap. xxxv. as may be seen by comparing them with the xt.

One ought only to observe, that this character is so peculiar, that it stinguishes the Messiah from all the other Prophets who went be- re him; for none of those to whom God had given power to work iracles, had either given sight to the blind, or power to the lame to alk.

2. They perfectly came up to the end of his ministry, as he was the essiah; for it was his design to assure his Disciples of the immortality hich he promised to them; and these cures, and these resurrections, hich were wrought only by his word, were sufficient to convince em, as well of the sovereign power he had to execute his promises, as his goodness, which was necessary to confirm the faith of his fol- wers.

3. Some of his miracles were such as evinced his likeness to *Moses*: changes water into wine at *Cana*; he feeds many thousands in the de- t; he walks on the water, and makes one of his Disciples to walk th him; as *Moses* changed the waters to blood, and had caused manna rain down upon the *Israelites*, and had opened the sea for their pas- ge.

4. One ought to observe here, that if Jesus Christ's miracles were t like those of *Moses*, two only excepted, viz. his cursing of the bar- n fig-tree, and the drowning of the swine, this was to shew that he is not come, like *Moses*, to execute the judgments of God, but to ercise acts of grace and mercy; those now mentioned being sufficient evince it was not for want of power.

If the *Samaritan* woman argued very rationally when she said con-

cerning Christ, *When the Messiah shall come, will he do greater signs th these?* we may with more reason urge it now, since we know not or that Jesus Christ hath wrought such great miracles, but also confer upon his Disciples a power of doing greater miracles than himself e did.

CHAP. XI.

That the Predictions of our Lord JESUS CHRIST *clearly prove him t the* MESSIAH.

ONE might have observed, that *John the Baptist* foretold ma things concerning the person of our Lord, and the glory of ministry; that *Simeon* foretold that he was to be *a sign which shoul spoken against:* and it is known how exactly these things were fulfill

But it will be more for our purpose to examine those prophecies wh were pronounced by Christ himself.

I pretend not to repeat them all here, nor to shew by how many wa and upon how many occasions, Jesus Christ did reiterate them: t would take up too much time. I shall only set down the chief of the and add some few reflexions.

When Jesus Christ calls the fishers to follow him, he foretels that would make them teachers of the world; *I will make you*, saith he, *fis of men.* He promises to make them famous by miracles, and to s them the gifts of his Holy Spirit, which the people of *Israel* had now above 400 years been deprived of.

He promised to give them an authority over the consciences of me so that what they should forbid us on earth, should be forbidden heaven.

He foretels the calling of the *Gentiles* to his religion; *Many*, saith *shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with* Abraham, Isa *and* Jacob, *in the kingdom of heaven*; which is the more considera because he seemed himself unwilling to shew any favour to the *Gent* whom he called *Dogs*, according to the language of the *Jews.*

He foretels the rejection of the *Jews*; *The children of the kingd* saith he, *shall be cast out into outer darkness.*

He foretels the persecutions which were to happen to his Disci from the *Jews*, as well as from the *Roman* governors; *They shall their hands on you, and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues, into prisons, being brought before kings*, &c.

He foretels, that notwithstanding all these persecutions, yet his chu should not only continue, assuring them that *the gates of hell should n prevail against her*; but also should greatly flourish and increase, acc ing to what *David* had foretold, *Psalm* cx. verse 3. alluding to the den fruitfulness which is caused by dew.

He above thirty times foretels his ſuffering and death.
He foretels his reſurrection the third day.
He foretels that *Judas* ſhould betray him, St. *Peter* deny him; that his oſtles ſhould be ſcattered, as ſoon as they ſhould ſee him ſmitten. He etels the martyrdom of St. *Peter*, which he was to ſuffer for his ſake; d to St. *John*, that he was to ſurvive the deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*. He etels, that after his aſcenſion to *heaven*, he ſhould begin the call of all e nations of the earth; *When I ſhall be lifted up from the earth*, ſaith he, *hall draw all men unto me.*
He often foretels the deſtruction of *Jeruſalem* and the temple; *Behold*, th he, *your houſe is left unto you deſolate.*
He foretels that many falſe Meſſiahs ſhould come after him, whom the ws ſhould receive, though they had rejected him as an impoſtor.
Several reflexions may be made upon theſe predictions of our Lord. ſhort, one may obſerve at firſt, that there are three ſorts of them in e *New Teſtament*: ſome of them were fulfilled ſoon after they were onounced; as thoſe concerning the aſs which he ſent his Diſciples r, thoſe of his death and reſurrection, of St. *Peter*'s denying him, and e flight of his Apoſtles, &c.
The deſign of theſe was to eſtabliſh the belief of thoſe which were rther off; which is the method of God himſelf, the Father of our Lord, the *Old Teſtament*, as I have obſerved.
Some of them related to matters which were more remote; as the wars, or inſtance, which Chriſt foretold, the deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, and e diſperſion of the *Jews*.
Laſtly, there were ſome whoſe accompliſhment was at a very great iſtance, after many ages, ſome of them reaching to the end of the orld.
One ſees plainly that this mixture of our Saviour's predictions, which re of ſo very different ſorts, is of uſe to confirm the belief, and aſcer-ain the truth of them, the exact fulfilling the firſt oracle making way or the belief and expectation of the ſecond, and ſo on, till all be ful-lled.
One may obſerve afterwards, that Jeſus Chriſt and his Apoſtles, on whom he (according to his promiſe), after his aſcenſion, poured forth the ſpirit of prophecy, did ordinarily follow the ſame notions and expreſ-ions which the Prophets of the *Old Teſtament* made uſe of.
Thus we find Jeſus Chriſt makes uſe of *Daniel*'s notions, where he peaks of the deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*; thus we ſee that he imitates the noſt illuſtrious actions of the Prophets; and, to make his predictions the nore obſerved, in accompliſhing the prophecy of *Zachariah* on *Palm-Sunday*, in the midſt of the acclamations of the people he weeps over *Jeruſalem*, as if its deſtruction were already come. Thus Jeſus Chriſt aith to St. *Peter*, *When thou ſhalt be old, another ſhall guide thee, and carry hee whither thou wouldſt not* (*u*); thus foretelling his death: thus he in-tructs him in the calling of the *Gentiles*, under a repreſentation of all ſorts of beaſts, commanding him alſo, even as to the impure animals, *Slay and eat*. All the *Revelations* are full of ſuch prophetical ideas, taken from the *Old Teſtament*, from *Geneſis*, *Iſaiah*, *Ezekiel*, *Zachariah*, &c.

But

(*u*) Joh. xxi. 18.

But here are other reflexions of as great importance as the former.

The firſt is, That the greateſt part of theſe predictions are nothin but a continuance and more diſtinct explication of the oracles of the *O Teſtament*, concerning the ſufferings of the Meſſiah, the calling of th *Gentiles*, the deſtruction of the commonwealth of the *Jews*; and beſide they are continued to the laſt day of the world, which is the end prophecy.

The ſecond is, That theſe predictions had not the leaſt probabili upon which they might rationally have been grounded. What likel hood was there, that Jeſus Chriſt ſhould be crucified, he who raiſed th dead, who commanded the ſea and winds, he whom they would hav taken by force to make him their king? What likelihood was ther that the Apoſtles, a company of poor miſerable *Jews*, ſhould bring ov the *Gentiles* to the religion of a man who was accurſed by the ſynagogu of the *Jews*, and crucified like a ſlave by the authority of the *Roma* magiſtrate? What probability was there of the deſtruction of *Jeru ſalem*, whilſt the *Jews*, accuſtomed to the *Roman* yoke, made it their bu ſineſs to avoid all manner of occaſions that might ſtir up the indignatio of their maſters againſt them? *It is expedient*, ſay they, *rather that o man periſh* (meaning Jeſus) *than to hazard the welfare of the whole natio*

The third is, That theſe oracles were written by the Apoſtles, n only amongſt diſcourſes of another nature, but alſo linked together i ſuch a chain, that their connexion will not permit us to believe that the were contrived after the matters which they relate to were paſt; and al that they are conſtantly related by three Evangeliſts, long time befo the things came to paſs, St. *John* being the only witneſs of the deſtruc tion of *Jeruſalem*.

The fourth is, That theſe oracles gave the Apoſtles as much groun to expect calamities and violent deaths, as to Jeſus Chriſt himſelf; ſo th there is no pretence of doubting that they were not faithfully record by the Evangeliſts; and that therefore, ſeeing the accompliſhment h exactly anſwered to the oracle, we ought to look upon them as Divi oracles.

I confeſs that theſe oracles, no more than the books of the *New Teſt ment*, were ever committed to the public cuſtody of the *Jews*, as fo merly the oracles of the Prophets of old were; but this cannot real diminiſh their authority.

I will not obſerve at preſent, that becauſe the temple was to be burn it was not proper to depoſe them there; and it was for this reaſon G thought fit to cauſe the oracles of the *Old Teſtament* to be tranſlated lo before.

Nor yet, that it was very proper that theſe predictions, as well the books of the *New Teſtament*, ſhould be put into the hands of t *Gentiles*, who thenceforward were to be the people of God, and h temple.

But this I obſerve, that nothing can be imagined more ſolemn th theſe prophecies of our Saviour and his Diſciples, as well as never a thing was more exactly fulfilled.

Jeſus Chriſt was born at *Bethlehem*, according to the oracles. No as no man is maſter of the place of his birth, ſo it is plain that here

room left for impoſture: neither is a man any more the maſter of his
th; wherefore, to give a certain character to his prophecy, he fore-
his dying at *Jeruſalem*; which accordingly was accompliſhed in all
circumſtances. Can any thing be more exact?
But one may ſay, that it was eaſy for the Diſciples to forge predic-
ns ſuitable to the event, in like manner as *Virgil* hath done, in the ſixth
his *Æneids*, of *Marcellus*. One may indeed contrive an impoſture
ich ſhall be poſſible, and which may anſwer to ſome few oracles; but
all hereafter ſhew the folly of that thought, when I come to prove
faithfulneſs of the Apoſtles and Evangeliſts.
But can we conceive ſuch a ſuſpicion concerning the converſion of
Gentiles, the ruin of Paganiſm, the victory of Chriſtianity after
perſecutions? It is now above 1600 years that the Chriſtian Reli-
on ſubſiſts; whereas, who could have aſſured the Diſciples of Jeſus
riſt, that their doctrine would have had ſo much as one or two fol-
vers after their death? The greateſt empires, that of the *Chaldeans*,
the *Perſians*, of the *Grecians*, and that of the *Romans*, have been over-
ned; and none of them ſingly have been of ſo long continuance as the
gdom of Jeſus Chriſt, which nevertheleſs was attacked by all that
s great and powerful in the world. Who ſees not that this is the em-
e whereof *Daniel* ſpeaks in the ſeventh of his Revelations, *which was*
ver to have end.
Jeſus Chriſt foretold, as it is ſet down by his Diſciples, according
the prophecy of *Daniel*, that the temple of *Jeruſalem* ſhould be de-
oyed, and never built again: who could tell the Apoſtles, if they had
rged this oracle themſelves, that the endeavours of *Julian* to confound
is prophecy, when he began to rebuild the temple, would be in vain,
indeed they proved by an effect of the Divine vengeance againſt the
ws, who were engaged in the rebuilding of it, under the authority
that emperor? (*x*)
Indeed, if one reflects on the oracles of Jeſus Chriſt, one ſhall find
em a thouſand times more known than thoſe of the *Jews*.
1. The greateſt part of them were penned at one and the ſame time.
2. They were writ by ſeveral authors, who lived in different places.
3. They were read over the whole earth every Lord's day: they have
en explained and commented upon ſoon after, every one endeavouring
take notice of their accompliſhment.
4. They have been alledged in diſputes againſt *Jews* and *Gentiles*, and
ve ſerved for a foundation to the faith of the Chriſtian church, whoſe
achers have made it their buſineſs to ſhew their uniformity with the
acles of the *Old Teſtament*, which are in the hands of the *Jews*, though
e *Jews* have always conſidered the Chriſtians as their moſt mortal
emies.
But one may alſo find that theſe oracles being for the moſt part much
ore clear and expreſs, their accompliſhment alſo hath been ſo much
e more eaſily diſcernible: from whence it evidently follows, that
ſus Chriſt ought to be be acknowledged *as the Prophet that was like unto*
loſes, as is mentioned in the eighteenth of *Deuteronomy*, that is indeed
e *true Meſſiah.*

(*x*) *Ammian. Marcellin.* lib. 23.

CHAP. XII.

That JESUS CHRIST *died precisely in the same Manner as it was foretold that the* MESSIAH *should die.*

I HAVE shewed, in my third part, that God had given to his church several oracles to explain distinctly this great truth concerning the Messiah.

1. He had set this up for a rule by *Moses*, *Cursed is he that hangeth on a tree.*

2. He had proposed by *David* the idea of the Messiah, as having his hands and feet pierced; the *Gentiles* and *Jews* uniting themselves against him.

3. He had foretold by *Isaiah*, that the Messiah was to be accounted a malefactor, and put to death.

4. He had repeated the same ideas by the Prophet *Zechariah*, who describes the manner of his being pierced, which has a natural reference to the notion of crucifixion.

I have also set down the reasons for which God separated the several parts of those prophetical descriptions of so surprising an event: the difficulty there was on the one hand to make these ideas to be received which seem full of contradictions, the Messiah having been at first set forth as the Fountain of Blessing; and, on the other hand, their seeming incompatibility with the glory which God had promised to the Messiah and by him to the *Israelites*.

And at last, I have shewed that these oracles do exactly and clearly describe the things which were to happen to the Messiah; which was to be so, because of the nature of those events, which were so strange, and at such a distance from the common ideas which men have, for the most part, of such things.

Our business therefore only is to consider at present, whether indeed Jesus Christ died in the same manner as the Prophets had foretold that the Messiah should.

This character is a very illustrious one, to confirm that Jesus Christ is the Messiah; for it is well known that a prisoner is no longer master of the things that happen to him, neither of the kind of his death, nor of the manner of his burial.

In short, nothing can be imagined more foolish than to suppose that the Disciples of Jesus Christ should apply to their master, that he might pass for the Messiah, such oracles as had not usually been applied to the Messiah by the *Jews*, amongst whom they lived, and whom they endeavoured to dispose for the receiving of Jesus Christ as the promised Messiah.

Now we cannot conceive any thing more exact than the agreement which we find between the prophecies and the event.

1. When Jesus Christ, by his triumphant entry into *Jerusalem*, riding on an ass, had put his Disciples in mind of one passage in *Zachary*, he obliged them also to cast their eyes upon another, when he foretold his death

th, and their flight, as the accompliſhment of this oracle; *I will ſmite ſhepherd, and the flock ſhall be ſcattered*, Zach. xiii. 7. (*y*).

2. He was beſet with a band of *Roman* ſoldiers, and the ſervants of principal men amongſt the *Jews*, who apprehended him, under the nduct of *Judas*; which exactly anſwers, firſt, to the deſcription which find *Pſalm* xxii. *Dogs*, that is Heathens, whom the *Jews* treated as h, *and ſtrong Bulls*, that is *Jews*, repreſented by clean Beaſts, *have t me round*; and ſecondly, to that other prophecy, *He that eats bread th me hath lift up his heel againſt me.*

3. He offers himſelf freely to death, according to that of *Iſaiah*, that *gave his ſoul an offering for ſin.* This appears, not only by his going to the garden, where he knew that he ſhould be taken, but alſo by telling the ſoldiers that he was the man they looked for. He op- ſed St. *Peter*'s attempts towards his reſcue, and declares that he did t fly from death, but was willing to ſatisfy the intent of the prophe- es.

4. He is forſaken by his Diſciples, as he himſelf had teſtified of it as retold by the Prophets, *Zach.* xiii. 7.

5. He is ſtruck on the face before *Annas*, as *Jeremiah* had foretold, *ament.* iii. 30. *He giveth his cheek to him that ſmiteth him.*

6. He appears before *Caiaphas*, ſurrounded by every thing that was eat amongſt the *Jews*, whether lawyers or churchmen, according to *ſalm* ii.

7. He is ſilent before his unjuſt judges, and neglects to anſwer the ccuſations which the falſe witneſſes depoſed againſt him, according to he prophecy of *Iſaiah*, *As a ſheep before his ſhearers is dumb, ſo he openeth t his mouth*, Iſaiah liii. 7. and the deſcription which *David* gives of im, *Pſ.* xxxi. and xxxix.

8. They opened their mouths againſt him, in accuſing him of blaſ- hemy, as *David* had figuratively expreſſed it, *Pſalm* xxii. 13.

9. They ſpit in his face, they buffeted and abuſed him the whole ight, according to that oracle of *Iſaiah*, xlix. 6.

10. When *Judas* ſaw that Jeſus Chriſt was delivered to *Pilate* by the *ews*, who demanded his crucifixion, he returned the thirty pieces of lver, wherewith they purchaſed the Potters field, afterwards called the ield of Blood, and ſet apart by the *Jews* for the burial of ſtrangers, as vas foretold by *Zechariah*, xi. 12. and by *Jeremiah*, xxxii. 25.

11. He is accuſed before *Pilate*, and brought before *Herod*, without uſtifying himſelf of the crimes laid to his charge, as it is *Pſalm* xxxviii. nd xxvii. 12.

12. *Pilate* and *Herod* agree in conſpiring the death of Jeſus Chriſt, according to the deſcription of *Pſalm* ii.

13. *Pilate* deſiring to ſave Jeſus, the *Jews* demand *Barabbas* might be eleaſed, and Jeſus puniſhed, as *David* had foretold, *Pſalm* xxii. 14.

14. Jeſus Chriſt was ſcourged by *Pilate*'s order, which was foretold, *Pſalm* xxxviii. and lxix. *Iſaiah* liii. ver. 5, and chap. lxiii.

15. He is brought forth by *Pilate* to the people with an *Ecce Homo*, *Behold the Man*, which was foretold by *Iſaiah*: *When we ſhall ſee him, there is no beauty that we ſhould deſire him; he is deſpiſed and rejected of men: we did eſteem him ſtricken, ſmitten of God, and afflicted.*

16. He

(*y*) Matth. xxvi. 31.

16. He is afterwards delivered to the ſoldiers, who, before they crucified him, inſulted over him with a thouſand indignities, and ſcourged him again, according to the prophecies ſo often before alledged.

17. They crucify him with two robbers, which anſwers to that prophecy, *Iſaiah* liii. 12. *He was numbered with tranſgreſſors.*

18. They give him gall and vinegar to drink, as was foretold *Pſalm* lxix.

19. They pierce his hands and feet in nailing him to the croſs, which anſwers to *Pſalm* xxii. 17, 18.

20. They part his garments, which is repreſented in the ſame *Pſalm*, verſe 19. and caſt lots on his veſture, according to the ſame *Pſalm*, in the very ſame place.

21. He ſuffers a thouſand reproaches upon the croſs, according to what we find *Pſalm* xxii. verſe 8. and *Pſalm* lxix. verſe 8, 10.

22. And in particular, the *Jews* and *Scribes* reproach him in the very words of *Pſalm* xxii. verſe 8.

23. Jeſus Chriſt cries out, applying to himſelf the beginning of *Pſalm* xxii. *My God! My God! Why haſt thou forſaken me?* as he had before applied to himſelf the prophecy concerning the Meſſiah in the third of *Daniel*.

24. He commends his ſoul into the hands of God, in the very words which we read *Pſalm* xvi.

Theſe are the principal circumſtances of the death of Jeſus Chriſt, which one ſees to be exactly agreeable to the prophecies going before concerning them: let us now conſider thoſe which followed his death, which we ſhall not find to be leſs particular.

1. The bones of Jeſus Chriſt were not broken, as thoſe of the two thieves; which one may ſee foretold, *Pſalm* xxxiv. verſe 21.

2. They opened his ſide with a ſpear, according to the idea of *Zechariah*, chap. x. verſe 12. *They ſhall look upon him whom they have pierced.*

3. His body is buried by *Joſeph of Arimathea*, in a new ſepulchre; which anſwers to the prophecy of *Iſaiah*, chap. liii.

Theſe remarks do, in my judgment, clearly prove, that in the death of Chriſt all the characters by which the Prophets have diſtinguiſhed the death of the Meſſiah, are actually found.

But, that we may yet be more ſenſible how juſtly theſe oracles are applied to Jeſus Chriſt, here are ſome reflexions upon the application which the Apoſtles make of theſe particular facts which happened to Chriſt, to thoſe oracles which I have now mentioned.

The firſt is, That the relation of theſe facts is joined with an account of the weakneſs whereinto they all fell: they relate their own flight, and forſaking their maſter, with St. *Peter*'s denying of him; whilſt they ſet down the courage of thoſe women, and that entire love which they ſhewed to the perſon of Jeſus.

The ſecond is, That the account of the accompliſhment of theſe ancient oracles is interwoven with the accompliſhment of thoſe which were uttered by Jeſus Chriſt, which alone are ſufficient to make good his claim.

The third is, That our Saviour did never on any occaſion more openly ſtand to his pretenſion of being the Meſſiah, than when he applied to himſelf

mſelf thoſe oracles which by their public conſent were referred to the leſſiah, which the *Jews* at that time more obſtinately conteſted than er.

The fourth is, That there never was a more exact deſcription of all rcumſtances which might aſſure us of the truth of any relation, than at which the Evangeliſts have given us of the death of Jeſus Chriſt, which we find the places, the time, the perſons, their diſcourſes, and her things of that nature, ſet down with extreme care.

The fifth is, That as this fact, with all its circumſtances, is the moſt xactly deſcribed of any thing that ever was, ſo it was a matter conerning which it was ſcarce poſſible to impoſe upon any one. All was one in the face of the whole nation, who were met together at their oſt ſolemn feſtival: all was done in the preſence of the ſovereign Heathen magiſtrate, of the council of the *Jews*, of *Herod*, and of thoſe ho followed him to *Jeruſalem*.

The ſixth is, That we find an account of ſome miracles interwoven ith this relation of the Evangeliſts concerning the death of Chriſt; and hoſe miracles as public, and as little ſubject to ſuſpicion, as the death ſelf of Jeſus Chriſt, if we take the pains to examine them.

They who come to take Jeſus, fall down backward to the ground; eſus Chriſt reſtores the ear of the high prieſt's ſervant, which was cut ff: there was darkneſs over all the land, from nine o'clock in the morng till noon; the vail of the temple is rent. Theſe are miraculous ctions, and ſuch as the *Jews* might eaſily have refuted, whereſoever hey had been propoſed, if the truth of them had not been beyond all queſtion.

From all theſe remarks it evidently follows, That it is impoſſible to diſpute the application which the Apoſtles make of theſe oracles, which re ſo particular, to the perſon of Jeſus Chriſt, as the true Meſſiah: we ind every part of their relation exactly anſwering to the prophecies. How hen can any one doubt of their being fulfilled in him? eſpecially ſeeing t is evident, by ſo many other proofs, that he was indeed the Meſſiah, nd that God has been pleaſed ſo many other ways to confirm the ſame ruth.

CHAP. XIII.

That JESUS CHRIST *was raiſed again the third Day, according to the* PROPHETS, *and afterwards aſcended into Heaven.*

HAVING ſhewed, in the foregoing Chapter, that Jeſus Chriſt was crucified under *Pontius Pilate*, for maintaining that he was the promiſed Meſſiah; I am now to ſhew, that, according to the prophecies ſet down in my third part, he roſe again the third day, and afterwards aſcended into heaven. As theſe two facts are the moſt important

portant of all that are contained in the Gospel; because, if they be denied, all the Divine worship given to Jesus Christ, by the Apostles, and a great number of *Jews* and *Gentiles*, who received him for their master in matters of religion, is absolutely unlawful; so we ought solidly to prove, that they are indisputably true. Of which we shall be fully convinced, by making some observations upon the relation which the Evangelists give us concerning them; and we shall easily find therein all the characters of truth.

There is no necessity of observing, that a resurrection from the dead is a fact which can hardly be believed; and that, though the *Jews* did not all of them look upon it is an impossible thing, yet there were *Sadducees* amongst them, whose doctrine was publicly taught. It is certain that though the Disciples had seen Jesus Christ raising three persons from the dead, and amongst others *Lazarus*, a little before his death, yet we find that they were not thereby more disposed to believe that Christ was to rise from the dead.

In short, though the Evangelists tell us, that Jesus Christ himself had foretold that he was to rise again the third day, which was a thing so commonly known, that the priests, to elude the prophecy, desired of *Pilate*, that a guard might be set on Jesus's grave; yet they expressly tell us, that the Disciples, none excepted, were in such a consternation at the death of Jesus Christ, that they had entirely lost the hopes of seeing the accomplishment of that prophecy. Some pious women, who had accompanied him to the cross, and were desirous to shew some marks of their veneration after his death, came indeed to his sepulchre, but with spices to embalm his dead body; so far were they from expecting to find him risen from the dead. Though these holy women were convinced of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, by the apparition of an angel, by the discourse of our Saviour himself, and by the repetition of his order, that they should go to *Galilee*, where they should see him, yet the relation which they give of these things is accounted fabulous; so that two only of all the Apostles had the curiosity to go to the grave, and inform themselves. Here is a great unbelief amongst the Apostles, which was to be cured: this was a condition wholly inconsistent, if we suppose them impostors, and that they intended to impose upon the world.

A second thing we may observe is, That as the incredulity of our Saviour's own Disciples was extraordinary, so we cannot imagine any more efficacious means than were employed to overcome this their doubtfulness. If one joins the relations of the Evangelists together, one may find several degrees of evidence in those proofs which confirm the truth of the resurrection of our Saviour.

The first is, the manner of their being informed of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Angels at first declare his resurrection to some women; Jesus Christ afterwards appears to *Mary Magdalen*, all alone; afterwards he appears only to two of his Disciples, then to St. *Peter*; afterwards he appears to seven of them at once; then, to all his Disciples, except *Thomas*; and soon after, to the eleven, *Thomas being one of them.* After all this, he appears to a greater number of his followers; till at last, having been several times seen of them all, he appears to them all assembled together, and is taken up into heaven in their sight. It is evident, that

as

they were informed of this truth one after another, ſo they were more liged to examine the fact more attentively when Jeſus Chriſt appeared them.

The ſecond degree has relation to thoſe marks and characters by hich they were aſſured that it was Jeſus Chriſt himſelf. The Angels peat to the women the command which Jeſus Chriſt, before his death, ad given to his Diſciples, to go into *Galilee*; Jeſus Chriſt, appearing to *Mary Magdalen*, repeats the ſame to her, and gives her a particular com-iſſion for St. *Peter*, to comfort him in his affliction, for having denied is maſter. Appearing to his Diſciples, as they went to *Emmaus*, he efers them to the prophecies which ſpoke of his death and reſurrection; nd moreover, when he broke bread with them, they hear the ſame prayers hich he ordinarily uſed at the bleſſing of it. He appears to them the ame day the fifth time, and ſhews them his feet and his hands; he re-eats the grant of the authority which the Father had given him; he reathes upon them, ſaying, *Receive the Holy Ghoſt*; a week after, he lets *Thomas* touch him; he appears afterwards to ſeven of his Apoſtles upon he lake of *Tiberias*, where he confirms St. *Peter* in his charge, from hich his denying of Chriſt might ſeem to have excluded him, after e had wrought a miracle in the draught of the fiſhes, which was ike ſome miracles which he had wrought before his death. Afterwards, e appears upon the ſame mountain in *Galilee*, where, in all probability, he had been transfigured before, and is there ſeen of five hundred of his Diſciples at once. And laſt of all, he appears to them at *Jeruſalem*, after their return from *Galilee*; and from thence goes with them to *Bethany*, where, after he had told them of the abſolute power which God had given them, he commands them to go and baptize in his name, he foretels the miracles which they ſhould work, and the gifts which they ſhould receive at *Jeruſalem*. All theſe ſo very different circumſtances were only deſigned to aſſure their eyes, their hands, their minds, their conſciences, that was the ſame Jeſus whom they had always followed.

It is worth our taking notice of the diverſity of theſe circumſtances, for the certainty of this fact, which abſolutely prevent all pretences of doubtfulneſs. Jeſus Chriſt appears ten ſeveral times after his death: he appears five times on the very day of his reſurrection; he appears at ſeveral hours, to different perſons, in ſeveral places, but always to perſons to whom he was familiarly known, to thoſe who were not at all credulous. The firſt news they had of his reſurrection ſeemed only to raiſe their ſcruples, if the teſtimony of their ſenſes, which ſaw him and touched him, had not removed all ſuſpicions. Jeſus Chriſt appears to them in places where he had wrought many miracles, and where he had often before converſed with them.

But one may make another more important reflexion, upon the time and the day wherein our Saviour roſe again. Of the ten ſeveral times in which he appeared to his Diſciples, he appeared five times on the day of his reſurrection; he appeared to them eight days after; and after that, the eighth day, which he ſignalized by his frequent appearing to his Diſciples, was conſecrated to celebrate the memory of this event every week: one finds certain tokens hereof in the writings of the Apoſtles; and it is known that all Chriſtians after them did inviolably obſerve this law.

Now,

Now, let any one consider, whether it would have been possible to introduce this custom in the time of the Apostles, if the resurrection of Christ had not been a fact confessed on all hands. Can any one conceive, that the Apostles and their Disciples, who were witnesses of the death of Jesus Christ, and who celebrated the memory thereof by a sacrament, could have been so stupid as to establish a custom which would put people upon examining the fact, and have convinced them in a little time, since none of those that followed them would have submitted to this practice, if they had not been convinced by their eyes, and their other senses, and by a thousand other proofs, of the truth of so capital a fact, which was so much disputed by the *Jews*, of which they were obliged to make a solemn commemoration two and fifty times every year, as long as they lived?

Let us add to this remark, which we have elsewhere urged, with reference to the creation, another reflexion upon a fact which the Evangelists tell us: they tell us, that though the resurrection of Christ was accompanied with very peculiar circumstances, sufficient to convince both *Jews* and *Gentiles* of the truth of it, being ushered in with an earthquake, with apparitions of angels to the soldiers that guarded the sepulchre of Jesus, and were frightened thereby, yet the council of the *Jews* contrived, with the soldiers, a most impudent lie to outface it; and accordingly the soldiers, coming before *Pilate*, tell him that the Disciples had stolen away the body of Jesus whilst they slept; and his Disciples tell us, that, since, this hath been the common opinion of the *Jews*.

I will not so much as take notice here of the palpable falsity of this deposition; for, if the soldiers were asleep, how could they depose concerning a fact which was done at that time? if they were not asleep, why did not they hinder the Disciples from taking the body of their master away? How could they affirm that thieves had taken him away, when the linen clothes wherein his body was shrouded being left in the grave, and the napkin that was about his head being folded up in a place by itself, so absolutely evince that he was not taken away by persons that were in fear of a surprise? What probability is there, in short, to suspect that his Disciples, who forsook Jesus Christ whilst he was yet alive, who fled from him at that time, should undertake such a hazardous attempt, to have his body only?

Neither will I insist upon a representation of the Apostle's sincerity, which made them give us in their histories a plain account of the report which was spread against the belief of the resurrection of Jesus, before ever that the Disciples had attested the same.

But I observe another very particular character in their relation, which is, that it was impossible for them to establish this fact of the resurrection, without accusing thereby the whole council of the *Jews*, of the most shameful and crying imposture that ever was: to write a thing of this nature against the heads of that religion, was to sacrifice themselves to the hatred of the public, and to expose themselves to inevitable ruin. In short, let us imagine whether, after a charge of this nature, it was easy for the Apostles to publish their books, and preach publicly that Jesus Christ was risen from the dead? And yet this was what they did with a surprising diligence, when they inserted this terrible accusation into

to their books and ſermons; which alone is ſufficient to demonſtrate at they were infinitely convinced of the reſurrection, and alſo in a contion to convince all gainſayers, as we ſhall ſhew hereafter.

One may add to this proof the converſion of St. *Paul*, and the care hich he afterwards took to confirm the truth of the reſurrection of eſus Chriſt. He was a declared enemy of Jeſus Chriſt, and of the hriſtian religion; and yet, ſoon after the death of Chriſt, he preaches im up for the Meſſiah. How came this ſudden change? He aſſerts hat he had ſeen in heaven this Jeſus who was riſen from the dead, and eceived from him the Apoſtleſhip; accordingly we find him preaching y theſe orders, without any communication had with the firſt Diſciples f Jeſus Chriſt. He relates theſe matters in a manner ſo little affected o advance his miniſtry in the minds of the *Galatians*, who preferred t. *Peter* and the other Apoſtles before him, that there is no ground left o doubt of them.

One ought to make a like reflexion upon the converſion of *Cornelius* he centurion: he was a proſelyte, that is, a *Gentile* by birth, but a *Jew* y profeſſion; and by the employment he was in, he had occaſion of beng more particularly informed of the depoſition of the ſoldiers, who robably were not unknown to him, for he was in the garriſon at *Cæſaea*, which was not far from *Jeruſalem*. Yet, however, this *Cornelius*, fter he had a viſion which commanded him to ſend to *Joppa*, a place nade famous, becauſe *Jonah* the Prophet ſet ſail from thence, who was type of the Meſſiah in his death and reſurrection; this *Cornelius*, I ſay, embraced the Chriſtian religion, becomes the firſt biſhop of *Cæſarea*, nd died a martyr for the reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt.

The great affection which St. *Luke* had for St. *Paul*, confirms the ſame truth. St. *Luke* had never ſeen our Saviour; he was born at *Antioch*, where in all probability he exerciſed his profeſſion of phyſic; yet he was converted to Chriſtianity, and followed St. *Paul* in all places, and writ the hiſtory of his miracles and preaching. Who doubts but that the reaſon hereof was, becauſe he had ſeen the dead whom Chriſt had raiſed to life, and had ſeen St. *Paul*, whom Jeſus Chriſt had dignified with the Apoſtleſhip, raiſe others alſo from the dead?

It is certain that thoſe who were firſt convinced by the relation of the Apoſtles, muſt needs have had very evident proofs of the truth of it.

The *Jews* had *Sadducees* amongſt them, who denied the poſſibility of the reſurrection in general: the council of the *Jews* eſpecially had made it their buſineſs to decry the conduct, the doctrine, and the miracles of Jeſus Chriſt, and in particular to make the belief of his reſurrection ſuſpected; and ſo much the more, becauſe Jeſus Chriſt had foretold it, and his Apoſtles maintained that it was come to paſs accordingly. If, in oppoſition to theſe ſtrong prejudices, there had only been the depoſition of two or three perſons to confirm this fact, there would have been reaſon to doubt of it; but we find that this thing, which of itſelf ſeems hard to be believed, and was otherwiſe ſo much conteſted, is, 1. Proved by ten ſeveral apparitions; 2. It is atteſted by above five hundred Diſciples; 3. It was publicly preached by the Diſciples of Chriſt at *Jeruſalem* itſelf, and throughout all *Judæa*, where it was moſt of all diſputed; 4. It was received by the very enemies of Jeſus Chriſt, as St. *Paul* and *Cornelius*,

nelius, and by thousands of those who, having demanded his death, were converted by the preaching of the Apostles; 5. It was confirmed by the martyrdom of the greatest part of them; and 6. It was not only authorised by the presence of the three persons whom Christ had raised to life, and who lived, one of them at *Bethany*, fifteen furlongs from *Jerusalem*, where Jesus ascended to heaven, another at *Naim*, &c. but it was further verified by several resurrections wrought by the Apostles, to whom Christ had vouchsafed that astonishing power.

It was also a very considerable thing, that the commonwealth of the *Jews* continued near forty years after the time that the Apostles undertook openly to preach up the resurrection of Jesus Christ as the capital article of their religion; and yet in all that time it was never opposed by any public writing either of the *Jews* or *Gentiles*. If the *Jews*, in their unjust intrigues again Jesus Christ and his religion, endeavoured to abuse the world, in this matter, with calumniating stories, neither have the Apostles been wanting to accuse the principal men of their nation of imposture; and they have despised their most cruel of the punishments to maintain the justice of their charge; and yet none of them would undertake to justify the calumnies of their council, though they saw Christianity spreading itself not only over all *Judea*, but in all parts of the world. To speak of it as it is, this conduct of theirs was a manifest betraying of their cause, or rather an open acknowledgment that what they had published against the innocency of the Disciples, and the truth of the resurrection of Jesus, was without all ground.

I foresee only one probable difficulty which can be opposed to the solidity of these reflexions. A *Jew* may demand, why Jesus Christ after his resurrection did not converse as openly amongst the *Jews* as before, that so he might have been known by those who had crucified him, which would have put the truth of the resurrection out of doubt?

But, to speak truth, this objection is not reasonable: for, 1. Jesus Christ had threatened the unbelieving *Jews*, they should see him no more; and he ought to make good his threatening. 2. Who sees not that they would have looked upon his appearing amongst them as a fantastic apparition, after they had seen him work so many miracles, and had attributed them to the devil? 3. I say, that such an apparition was not agreeable to our Saviour's doctrine in the parable of the rich man: *They have Moses and the Prophets; if they hear not them, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead* (z). 4. Jesus Christ having for the most part converted in *Galilee* at *Nazareth* and *Capernaum*, it was to the *Galileans* and his Disciples that he was chiefly to shew himself, to be acknowledged by them, as being the persons who were particularly to bear witness of this truth. After so strong a presumption as the governors of that people had of Christ's resurrection, founded upon the earthquake which accompanied it, and upon the deposition of the soldiers to whom the Angels had appeared, had not they all the reason in the world to believe the testimony of the Apostles concerning this truth, which they heard several times attested by them in full council, and saw confirmed by miraculous cures which they could not question in the least?

Lastly, Is not this objection the most ridiculous thing in the world For

(z) Luke xvi. 29, 31.

For, let us ſuppoſe that theſe conſiderations are not ſtrong enough to juſtify our Saviour's conduct when he gave theſe proofs of his reſurrection, both it follow, becauſe he did not make choice of means (in order to perſuade the *Jews*) which they preferred before others uſed by him, without any ſolid reaſon, that therefore we muſt reject the depoſition of ſo many witneſſes who unanimouſly atteſt it? Since Jeſus Chriſt had raiſed three perſons to life again, which then lived in *Judea*; ſince *Jeruſalem* had continued forty years after the death of Chriſt; ſince ſixty ſolemn feaſts were celebrated in that time, where all the *Jews* had an occaſion to examine the truth of theſe facts, and the truth or falſity of the accuſation charged upon the Apoſtles by the council of the *Jews*; and that multitudes of *Jews* and *Gentiles* were converted at the preaching of the Apoſtles, who reduced all to this queſtion of the fact of the reſurrection of our Saviour; is not this an invincible proof againſt all the accuſations and ſuſpicions of the Synagogue?

Foraſmuch as the witneſſes who maintain the reſurrection of Chriſt, are the very ſame that atteſt his aſcenſion into heaven, and that they aſſert it with the ſame proofs, and the ſame zeal, the reflexions here ſet down may ſerve for that alſo; and the rather, becauſe I am next to conſider the ſending of the gifts of the Holy Ghoſt, which is an undeniable proof, both of the reſurrection of Chriſt and his aſcenſion; and that theſe very gifts of the Holy Spirit enabled the *Jews* to write, preach, and publiſh throughout all the world, the truths of that Chriſtianity which we now profeſs.

CHAP. XIV.

That JESUS CHRIST *ſent to his Apoſtles, and to the Primitive Chriſtians, the miraculous Gifts of his* HOLY SPIRIT, *as he had promiſed in the Ancient Prophecies.*

I HAVE ſhewn that the prophecies of the *Old Teſtament* ſpeak very plainly of this ſending of the Spirit, as a preliminary to the calling of the *Gentiles*, which was the great deſign of God. The Prophet *Joel* ſpeaks of it as ſuch, and makes this wonder to precede the deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, as St. *Peter* obſerves in the ſecond of the *Acts*. *Iſaiah* ſpeaks very particularly of it as ſuch, in the eleventh chapter of his prophecy, where he ſufficiently intimates that the ſpirit of prophecy ſhould from thenceforward ſo reſt upon Jeſus Chriſt, that it would not be found any longer among the *Jews*, whoſe city and temple ſhould be deſtroyed.

At preſent my buſineſs is to ſhew that this thing has been exactly fulfilled, according to the deſign which God had laid down in the Prophets. To be convinced of this, we need only make ſome reflexions upon the relation which St. *Luke* gives us of it in the *Acts*.

He

He tells us therefore, that fifty days only after the death of Jesu Christ, the Apostles having continued at *Jerusalem*, and being assemble there, they received the miraculous gifts of the Holy Ghost, that is, th power of speaking all sorts of languages, to make them fit to preach th Gospel to all nations, and to explain the most sublime mysteries of ou Saviour's religion.

Every thing is considerable in this relation of St. *Luke:* 1. That h relates this fact as happening fifty days only after the Jewish passover when Christ was crucified; the whole nation of the *Jews* having bee witnesses of his death. 2. That he relates it as happening in the sam city where Jesus Christ was condemned, that the same multitude wh after fifty days were again assembled there at this feast, might be witnesse of this miraculous event. In short, it plainly appears that this new law from mount *Sion*, was solemnly promulged in the presence of all th *Jews*, who were assembled from all parts of the world; as the old law was, when all the people assisted at the foot of mount *Sinai*. 3. Tha these gifts were granted to all the Disciples of our Saviour: gifts whic till that time had been wholly unheard of, and whereof some part onl had been granted for some Prophets, and to some Priests, and of whic none had been made partakers since the time of *Malachi*; God having s ordered it, that the desires of the *Jews* might be the more inflamed for th Messiah's coming, as also that upon his coming he might the more easil be discerned. 4. That this was a fact openly known amongst the *Jews* and differently interpreted by them; some saying, *They were full o new wine*. 5. That the Apostles asserted, by the mouth of St. *Peter* that this was an accomplishment of the ancient oracles, as well as of th promises of Jesus Christ. 6. That they declared that the resurrectio of Jesus Christ, his ascension into heaven, and this miraculous donative had been foretold by *David* and *Joel*. It is certainly therefore very na tural to make these following reflexions upon the relation of so consi derable an event.

The first will confirm the truth of this miraculous fact, if we conside that it is absurd to suppose that St. *Luke*, a wise man, should be so rash as to relate a matter of this nature, if he had not been fully convinced o it, and if it had not been an easy thing to have convinced his reader thereof also; nothing more being required for their conviction, but th presence of one of those first Christians, and to make a trial of this super natural virtue bestowed on them, for which there were frequent occasions

2. We must observe that this relation of St. *Luke* is, as it were, th foundation which he lays down, to make his book of the *Acts* to appea just and reasonable, and to justify the Apostles conduct in preaching th Gospel to the *Gentiles*, not only contrary to the opinion of the *Jews* who looked upon them as wholly excluded from the privileges of th covenant; but also contrary to the seeming maxim of Jesus Christ, wh acted only as the minister of circumcision; and contrary to the preten sions of many Christians, who, after the mission of the Holy Ghost, too it very ill that St. *Peter* had preached to the *Gentiles*.

3. St. *Luke* supposes that this fact came to pass in such a manner, tha it was followed by consequences as illustrious as they were incredible Twelve poor fishermen undertook to go and preach to all the world

tha

hat their master, who fifty days before was crucified at *Jerusalem*, at the rosecution of the whole synagogue, and by order of one of the magistrates f the *Roman* empire, was not only living, not only ascended into hea-en, but that he also had given them the power of speaking all sorts of nguages, of curing all diseases, and even of raising the dead.

4. They go yet further; they boldly maintain that Jesus Christ had iven them a privilege of communicating the same power to all those ho would believe that he was the promised Messiah; and this, without ny other mystery but the bare laying-on of their hands, after they had eceived them by baptism into the profession of Christianity.

Nothing could have been more easy than to convince them of the ontrary, unless they had confirmed the truth of their assertion by the iraculous consequences of that first miracle. The fact was publicly cknowledged: *Simon Magus* is convinced thereof; and he who had made imself famous by his sorceries, becomes a Disciple. St. *Luke*, in a his-ory of the actions of thirty years, relates the continual miracles wrought y the Apostles, and particularly by St. *Paul*, whom he constantly fol-owed.

It seems to me, that if one considers the history itself, and the person ho made it, it will appear to be a true and faithful relation; how-ver, there are other testimonies which invincibly establish the same ruth.

1. The Gospel was, in effect, established in most of the provinces and reat cities of the *Roman* empire. St. *Paul* writes to the Christians of *Thessalonica*, *Corinth*, and *Ephesus*, to the *Galatians*, *Colossians*, &c. which s an evident argument that there were Christians every where, that is, Disciples of these twelve fishermen, who understood nothing but their ative *Syriac* language. How then were all these nations converted, vithout supposing the truth of the miracle at the *Pentecost?*

2. The Apostles speak to them of these miraculous gifts as of a com-non thing; St. *Paul* employing some part of his first epistle to the *Corinthians*, to regulate those disorders which arose in the church, by eason of the abuse of those gifts. St. *James* speaks of the power that he priests had to cure the sick; and St. *Paul* wishes for an opportunity f going to *Rome*, to communicate those gifts to the *Romans*.

3. They take occasion to raise the dignity of the Gospel above that of he law, in calling i the ministry of the Spirit, in opposition to the letter f the law, notwithstanding the tables of the law had been given to *Moses* in so very illustrious a manner.

It is of great moment here to consider three things, which alone are ufficient to confirm the truth of the Christian religion.

The first is, That this mission of the Spirit is alone sufficient to con-ince mankind of the Divinity of Jesus Christ. God gave to *Adam* a power f speaking one language; and afterwards he divided the same, to make a onfusion among the builders of *Babel:* and Jesus Christ doth the same hing, to confirm the glory and belief of his Divinity. God vouchsafes he power of miracles to some, Jesus Christ communicates it to a far reater number; miracles not having been so generally wrought, because o people ever had that power in all the foregoing ages. The Father rought so few miracles, that he might leave to the Son this means of

making himself known. The Son had the glory of pouring forth the Holy Ghost in a greater abundance than the Father, thereby to supply the shame of his humiliation. This is the true reason why the Scripture saith, That *the Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus Christ was not yet glorified.*

The second is, That from this miracle one ought to infer these two conclusions: the first is, That God was fully pacified by the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, the Apostles constantly representing the passion of our Saviour as a sacrifice offered by him; the other is, That from that time forward mankind was consecrated to God at his temple. Jesus Christ, in his prayer before his death, expresses himself much in the same manner as *Solomon* did at his dedication of the first temple, and fire from heaven falls down on his sacrifice: Jesus Christ consecrates his Apostles to be the living stones of his temple, and causes the heavenly flames to fall down upon them, as had formerly been granted at *Solomon*'s dedication of the first temple.

The third is, That the *Jews* themselves cannot conceive a more glorious or magnificent accomplishment of the ancient oracles concerning the effusion of the Holy Spirit at the time of the Messiah, than what we find related by St. *Luke*; whereof the whole world may see the visible effects, in the calling of the *Gentiles* to the Christian religion: from whence one may rationally conclude, That Jesus Christ must be acknowledged for the Messiah whom God had promised.

CHAP. XV.

That, according to the Prophecies, the Apostles of JESUS CHRIST *have called the* GENTILES *to the Profession of the Christian Religion.*

WE have already seen what was the design of God, and that the distinction which he made of the *Jews* from other nations, was only that the Messiah might by that means be the more certainly known, in whom all mankind had a right, as being promised to *Adam.*

God renewed the idea of this truth in a very lively manner, when he assured *Abraham*, before he gave him the law of circumcision, *That in his seed all nations should be blessed. Jacob*, enlightened by the spirit of prophecy on his death-bed, plainly takes this truth for granted, when he says that the Messiah, whom he calls *Shiloh*, was to be the expectation of the *Gentiles*, *Gen.* xlix. Why doth he not say, that he was to be the expectation of the *Jews*, but because he supposeth that they were to be rejected, and the *Gentiles* called in their stead?

One sees in the *Psalms*, and in the Prophets until *Malachi* inclusively, a thousand declarations of this future calling of the *Gentiles* to the faith

n of the Meſſiah; and though the moſt part of the ideas which the phets make uſe of, ſeem to be very figurative, deſcribing the Meſſiah conqueror, who was to ſubdue the whole world to his dominion by force of arms; yet we find a great many others interwoven with n, which only relate to the profeſſion of the religion of the Meſſiah, which, not being capable of any other ſenſe, ſufficiently determine others, ſo as not to perplex the reader with thoſe ſeeming obſcuri-

But Jeſus Chriſt very diſtinctly declares this in divers places, and e all in the xxivth of St. *Matthew*; *This Goſpel*, ſaith he, *ſhall be ched throughout the world.*

ow, nothing could ever be more exactly fulfilled than theſe ancient les have been. Let the *Jews* cavil as long as they pleaſe about our ication of many of the prophecies of the *Old Teſtament* to our Saviour; nem put a ſenſe upon the Scriptures, which treat of this ſubject, con- to what the *Jews*, who were contemporary with Jeſus Chriſt, ever and to the moſt of thoſe with whom the firſt Chriſtians, as *Juſtin*, *ullian*, and others, from time to time diſputed; yet at leaſt they can- deny, but that the thing has been exactly fulfilled.

is clearer than the day, that nothing could be more exact. All ſtians, from one end of the world to another, worſhipped the God *rael*, according to the prophecy of *Malachi*: Jeſus Chriſt ſubjected to the moral part of the law of *Moſes*. The *Mahometans* themſelves learnt of the Chriſtians to acknowledge no other God but the God *rael*. The multitude of falſe Gods which the world worſhipped, aniſhed from all places where Chriſtianity has been planted; and few are left in compariſon of thoſe which are already deſtroyed; ſo we muſt conſider the thing as already gone very far. In truth, e things continue thus, one may reaſonably maintain againſt the , that our Jeſus and his Diſciples have taken away all the glory h could be reſerved for that Meſſiah whom they expect. They , if they be jealous for the glory of him whom they look for, en- our to make the world forſake the worſhip of the God of *Iſrael*, to e way for the accompliſhment of thoſe oracles which can have no in that ſtate wherein the world is at preſent.

it though this reflexion upon the exact accompliſhment of the oracles erning the call of the *Gentiles* to the religion of the Meſſiah may e, yet I think myſelf bound to make ſome further obſervations this ſubject. In ſhort, every thing deſerves to be conſidered in calling of the *Gentiles* to the knowledge of the Goſpel.

lo not take notice at preſent that the perſon firſt employed in calling e *Gentiles*, is St. *Peter*, to whom Jeſus Chriſt had promiſed the ho- of founding his church amongſt the nations, and who himſelf at thought that the thing was unlawful, and who, after a viſion given for that very purpoſe, obſerves the *Jewiſh* cuſtoms, and obliges the *les* to do the ſame; neither do I obſerve that the firſt who was d was *Cornelius*, a *Roman* officer, who reſided at *Cæſarea*, where he ne a proſelyte. Behold here a man engaged to examine that which d a better opportunity to do than any one elſe, by reaſon of the e of his charge, whether what the ſoldiers had depoſed concern-

ing the Disciples stealing away the body of our Saviour, were true o
no.

I am obliged to confine myself to some general reflexions upon thi
matter. I consider first the difficulty which was upon all accounts i
this design of calling of the *Gentiles*, and the prodigious success whic
this call of the *Gentiles* met with, according to the Prophets.

To make us understand this difficulty better, we need only consider
1. What were the prejudices of the *Jews*, even those who were becom
Christians; 2. What was the state of the world at the time of Jesu
Christ. The Heathens enjoyed each their several religions for a long
time than any history could trace it: they attributed the happiness o
their states and families to their gods. 3. We must observe the natu
of that preaching by which the *Gentiles* were converted: its subject wa
the strangest thing in the world. If the cross of Jesus Christ had prove
the scandal of the *Jews*, who looked upon the Messiah as the fountai
of blessing, and the cross as an accursed punishment; it was looke
upon no otherwise than as an heap of follies by the *Greeks* (who boaste
themselves to be the wisest men of the world), as well as by the oth
Gentiles.

Yet, after all this, one sees a prodigious success, and a surprising ex
tent of this call. Within a little time the world was filled with Chri
tians: St. *Paul* writes to those that were in *Asia*, *Greece*, and *Italy*; S
Peter, to those of *Pontus*; St. *John*, to those who were among the *Pa*
thians. There were not wanting some in the very emperor's cour
even that of *Nero*, who put St. *Peter* and St. *Paul* to death in the sixt
seventh year of our Lord.

One cannot attend to a success of this nature, without being extreme
surprised: let us conceive of a dozen, or thereabouts, of poor beggar
a dozen of unlearned men coming out of *Judea*, who should accuse t
whole world of folly and impiety; every one opposing them, especial
the *Jews*, who were incensed to see them go about to establish the b
lief of the cross in the world, as a doctrine which would explain t
accomplishment of the promises of God concerning the Messiah, of the
promises wherewith the *Jews* had filled all the *East*, and which h
rendered them at this time doubly ridiculous.

When, instead of persecuting the Apostles, they hearken unto them
or even when in the midst of chains and prisons they are examined, th
declare that true godliness consists in knowing Jesus Christ, even t
same Jesus who was crucified in *Judea*, for whose name's sake they h
been publicly scourged by order of the council of the *Jews*. Thus
find St. *Paul* boasting of his severe usage.

If persons question them more particularly about the actions of t
Jesus, they answer coldly, That the Son of God came down from he
ven; that he took upon him our flesh in the womb of a virgin; th
when he was become man, and yet an infant, *Herod* sought to kill hi
to avoid which he was carried into *Egypt*; that after having lived thi
years obscurely in a carpenter's shop, he was taken by the *Jews*, scourg
mocked, crowned with thorns, nailed to the cross, where they gave h
vinegar to drink; that there he cried out, *My God, my God, Why h*
t

ou forſaken me? that he died, was buried, and roſe again the third day, he had promiſed before his death.

But what is it that this JESUS teaches to thoſe that would follow him? is Apoſtles, in his name, require all men to renounce the pleaſures of his life; to abhor polygamy and fornication; and, inſtead of revenging n affront, to turn the other cheek to him that ſmites us; and to leave ur cloak alſo with him who takes our coat from us; to go two miles with im who conſtrains us to guide him one; to love our enemies; and to viſh well, and pray for thoſe that deſpitefully uſe us, and perſecute us.

But what rewards will he give to his ſervants? The Apoſtles anſwer, That he promiſes nothing that is conſiderable in this life, but an everaſting happineſs in the world to come.

It is viſible that nothing ſeems to be worſe contrived to gain credit han this ſtory. The weakneſs of Jeſus Chriſt is viſible; he was crucied. What ground is here to believe that he was able to perform his romiſes? The ſervice he preſcribes is very rough; the reward he prooſes is at a great diſtance; and, moreover, it is ſuch as appears very loubtful to thoſe who are not furniſhed with ſtrong impreſſions of the mmortality of the ſoul, and of a life to come.

But, on the other hand, the Apoſtles ſolidly demonſtrate that he is GOD, and not a mere men; that he can raiſe the dead, and that he can erform his promiſes. Though they do not ſay, Bring hither the blind, he lame, and the deaf, and we will heal them in his name; preſent your dead to us, and we will raiſe them in the name of that Jeſus who s born of *Mary*, of that Jeſus who died, and cried out on the croſs, *My God, my God, Why haſt thou forſaken my?* (for I acknowledge that this miraculous power which they had received, was only exerted upon certain occaſions, which the Spirit of God made choice of); yet they did that which was equivalent: for when blind men were brought to them, they ſaid, Ye blind, in the name of Jeſus, recover your ſight; and in like manner to the lepers, to poſſeſſed perſons, to the ſick of the palſy, to the dead. Upon this, all were converted, and the croſs of Jeſus Chriſt triumphs.

There are three ſorts of people in the world, wiſe men, men of a middle ſort, and ſuch as are of a lower capacity; and ſeveral of theſe three orders of men made profeſſion of the Chriſtian religion, as well amongſt the *Jews* as *Heathens*.

CHAP. XVI.

That the Christian Religion is founded on Proofs of Fact, and that consequently nothing in the World is so certain as the Truth of it.

THIS reflexion ought to be made more than once, because there is nothing so proper to establish the truth of the Christian religion beyond all contest, or that will confound Atheists, profane persons, and *Jews*, who endeavour to oppose it, more effectually.

I say then, that the chief articles on which the whole Christian religion is grounded, are confirmed proofs of fact, that is, by witnesses whose evidence cannot be questioned, without shaking all the certainty which we can have of any thing in this world, and without rejecting all the means whereby we can assure ourselves of the knowledge which we enjoy.

Many particular events which were perfectly divine, happened at the birth of *John the Baptist*, the forerunner of the Messiah; they were known throughout all the hill country of *Judea*; they happened to a priest, that is, a public person, and it was when he was employed in his public function in the temple; they are seconded by miracles which were known to the whole nation of the *Jews*; they are followed by the public ministry of *John the Baptist*, a man who censures all *Judea*, who openly declares himself the forerunner of the Messiah, and who hath a great number of Disciples, who are distinguished from those of our Saviour, who were spread throughout all *Judea*, and who continued after the death of our Saviour; these were Disciples of a man who, besides all this, doth not keep up any correspondence with our Saviour, and who at last falls by the hand of *Herod* for censuring his incest and lusts.

JESUS CHRIST is born in *Bethlehem*, under *Augustus*; a fact of which the *Roman* commissioners were witnesses, and which the records of that empire preserved as long as they were in being.

That the Angels testified their joy at his birth, is a fact which was confirmed by the shepherds of *Bethlehem*, long before Jesus Christ had any Disciples.

That a new star conducted the wise men of the *East* to *Bethlehem*, was an illustrious fact, and of which *Herod*, and the priests, and great men amongst the *Jews*, were exactly informed; and the Apostles would have found it a very difficult matter to impose this upon them, if the thing had not been distinctly known.

That the birth of Jesus Christ, and the arrival of the wise men, affrighted *Herod*, was a public thing, confirmed by the murder of the infants of *Bethlehem*, and reported to *Augustus*, together with the death of *Antipater*; whereof *Macrobius*, a Heathen, who was qualified for the knowledge of such a story, hath preserved the memory. Neither can this fact be called in question, because *Josephus* makes no mention of it, since so famous a Heathen attests it. *Augustus*, saith he, *having heard that amongst the infants which* Herod *the king of the* Jews *had caused to be killed*

lled in Syria, *under two years of age, he had killed his own ſon, ſaid, hat it was better to be* Herod's *hog than his ſon.*

That Jeſus Chriſt was in *Egypt*, and that he returned from thence, a fact with which the *Jews* to this day reproach our Saviour, as if he ad learned there the ſecret of working miracles.

That he confounded the Doctors at twelve years of age, is a fact of hich the whole nation of the *Jews* were informed, becauſe it happened one of thoſe three ſolemn feaſts which brought up the whole nation *Jeruſalem.*

That Jeſus Chriſt was baptized by St. *John*, and that he received a oſt glorious teſtimony from him, is a fact of which all thoſe *Jews* hom the miniſtry of St. *John* had drawn to the river *Jordan* were wit-eſſes.

That Jeſus Chriſt choſe for his Apoſtles men without learning, and f the meaneſt of the people, that he lived with them three years and an alf, preaching his doctrine, correcting the traditions of the *Jews*, orking miracles, and foretelling things to come, are facts of which the hole people of the *Jews* were witneſſes; and all the *Romans* that were *Judea* were fully informed of them; yea, they were known to all the orld. The *Jews* could not be ignorant of them, who came up to *Je-uſalem* from all parts of the world, to celebrate ten ſolemn feaſts accord-ng to the law, during the time in which theſe things were acting, and rom thence carried the report of them into ſeveral parts of the world here they were diſperſed.

It is evident alſo that Jeſus Chriſt laboured to perſuade men that he as the promiſed Meſſiah: this was the moſt conſiderable fact in the orld to the *Jews*, and which had relation to the moſt important point f their religion, and touched them the neareſt; a fact which happened t a time when all were in expectation of the Meſſiah, as appears by he conſultation of *Herod*, when the *Jews*, who were oppreſſed by the *Romans*, did moſt earneſtly ſigh for his appearance; a fact confirmed by ublic oracles, and known to the whole nation, yea to the Heathens hemſelves, for near three hundred years.

That Jeſus Chriſt, notwithſtanding all his miracles, was crucified at he purſuit of the *Jews*, and by the order of *Pontius Pilate*, is a fact of which the whole people of the *Jews* were witneſſes, becauſe it happened t the feaſt of the paſſover, that is, at a ſolemnity where the whole ation of the Jews was aſſembled: it is a fact which no Heathens ever went about to deny; they reproached the Chriſtians with it, who are ſo ittle aſhamed of it, that, according to the orders of the ſame Jeſus, they celebrate the memorial of it in the ſacrament of the euchariſt.

That there was thick darkneſs over all the land at the crucifixion of Jeſus Chriſt from the third hour till the ſixth, that is, from nine of the clock till twelve, according to our way of computing the time, was a fact of that nature, that the whole nation of the *Jews* might eaſily have convinced the Apoſtles of this impoſture, if it had not been as confeſſed a truth as the darkneſs in *Egypt*, before the departure of the *Iſraelites.*

That Jeſus Chriſt was raiſed the third day, is a fact atteſted by a great number of witneſſes, the memorial whereof they celebrated every

eighth day, as long as they lived, by a conſtant law, becauſe they conſidered this reſurrection as the ſeal of thoſe truths which Jeſus Chriſt had taught them: it is a fact, the truth whereof they have maintained before magiſtrates, before the people, in all parts of the world; it is a fact which they have publicly preached up, notwithſtanding all prohibitions which have been made; in ſhort, it is a fact which they have aſſerted in the midſt of the moſt cruel torments, and even until death.

That Jeſus Chriſt ſent down upon his Apoſtles the miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit, is a fact of which all *Jeruſalem* was a witneſs fifty days after the feaſt of the paſſover, when Jeſus Chriſt was crucified; it is as remarkable a fact as ever happened: twelve fiſhermen of *Galilee* maintain, in the face of the whole *Jewiſh* nation, that the ſame Jeſus whom the whole nation had demanded to be crucified but fifty days before, and who did actually ſuffer upon an infamous croſs, is riſen from the dead, and aſcended into heaven, after he had eaten and drunk with them, and had appeared ſeveral times to them after his reſurrection; and that he had given them the power of ſpeaking all ſorts of languages, and of healing all manner of diſeaſes.

That they ſpoke divers languages, is a fact moſt notorious, the truth whereof appears from the converſion of the world, which was found to be filled with their Diſciples, but a few years after this fact was done.

That they had the power of healing all diſeaſes as well as their maſter, is a fact the truth whereof is eſtabliſhed upon indiſputable teſtimonies, inſomuch as their ſucceſſors received the ſame gift by the laying-on of their hands. Two hundred years after, *Tertullian* mentions this gift, as being at that time well known amongſt Chriſtians.

That the Apoſtles, after they were rejected by the *Jews*, preached the Goſpel to the *Gentiles*, who alſo received it, is a fact of which there are ſo many proofs in the world, that it cannot be called in queſtion.

That the converted *Jews* ſtrongly oppoſed themſelves againſt the preaching of the Goſpel to the *Gentiles*, pretending, as the *Jews* now do, that the Meſſiah with his gifts and graces was confined to their nation, is a fact ſo well atteſted, that it cannot be called in queſtion, if we conſider the firſt diſpute, which gave occaſion to the firſt council of the Apoſtles, and to the conteſts of St. *Paul* with thoſe of his own nation.

That ſince that time the Apoſtles and their Diſciples have maintained by their writings and diſputes, and finally by their martyrdom, that Jeſus was the Meſſiah; that they have conſtantly ſtood to this claim, alledging the facts which the Goſpel propoſes, and maintaining that the matters there related were exact accompliſhments of the promiſes of God, and of the ancient prophecies: that all this is unqueſtionable, one needs only read their ſermons and ſpeeches ſet down by St. *Luke*, and their epiſtles; one needs only peruſe the Heathen hiſtory, and the works of thoſe that ſucceeded the Apoſtles, who followed their footſteps in eſtabliſhing the truth of the Chriſtian religion.

That the Apoſtles diſcharged their followers from the ceremonies which *Moſes* preſcribed, obliging them only to the eſſentials of morality; that they annulled the law which permitted divorces without ſufficient cauſe, and polygamy; theſe are things which none, who have read-

their

eir writings, or thoſe of their firſt Diſciples, can in the leaſt queſ-
on.

Laſtly, That they foretold many things, as well as their maſter; that
ey publiſhed their predictions, which they have extended to the end of
e world, and the return of Jeſus from heaven to judge the world; and
at they have recorded the particulars of many conſiderable events, ob-
rved by the Chriſtians, which have happened from time to time; theſe
e facts as well known, and as inconteſtable as any thing can be in the
orld, of ſuch a nature: whole nations are witneſſes of it. Differing
cts, interpreters who have ſeveral opinions concerning theſe pro-
ecies, the conteſts of the *Jews*, the oppoſition of Atheiſts, the cavils
f Heretics, the cruelty of tyrants, all theſe concur to prove clearly
at the Chriſtians received theſe prophecies from the Apoſtles, as well
s the truth of them, ſince even theſe oppoſitions were foretold, as well
s the perſecutions.

Thus I have given you a view of the greateſt part of the moſt impor-
ant articles which are contained in the Chriſtian religion; and I think
hat they are ſo ſolidly grounded upon proofs of fact, that I can aſſert
vith reaſon, that no facts in the world can be produced, ſo well eſta-
liſhed as theſe are, which are the fundamentals of our religion.

What facts are there which are atteſted by whole nations, as the
niracles of Jeſus Chriſt were? What facts are there about which men
were ſo careful to inform themſelves, as when a man pretends to the title
of the Meſſiah? What thing can we ſuppoſe that requires a ſtronger
conviction, becauſe of the difficulties it involves, than that of the reſur-
rection of Jeſus Chriſt? for thoſe who were eye-witneſſes of his cruci-
ixion, that is, who had ſeen him puniſhed by the magiſtrate, the hor-
ror of all his own people, and in all appearance forſaken of heaven.

To ſpeak the truth, as there cannot be a greater inſtance of fanatical
folly, than to attribute to twelve poor fiſhermen, whoſe maſter was cru-
cified at *Jeruſalem*, by public order, and by an effect of the hatred of
the whole nation—I ſay, to attribute to them the deſign of perſuading
that people, and the *Gentiles* alſo, that this man was raiſed again from the
dead, that he rules in heaven, that he has beſtowed upon them the mi-
raculous gifts of ſpeaking all ſorts of languages, and healing all manner
of diſeaſes—if this Jeſus had been never raiſed from the dead, nor had
beſtowed ſuch gifts upon them, the mind of man not being capable of ſo
great folly; ſo we have all the reaſon in the world to conclude, that
ſince they have atteſted this fact, and confirmed it by all the proofs which
might convince thoſe who, though they were not prejudiced, yet were
aſtoniſhed at the difficulty of the things themſelves, ſo nothing can
be more certain than facts ſo confirmed, as we pretend that theſe
actually were.

CHAP. XVII.

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That it cannot be queſtioned, whether the Books of the NEW TESTAMENT *were written by the Apoſtles.*

BEFORE we alledge thoſe arguments which will invincibly confirm the truth of the books of the *New Teſtament*, I deſire the reader to make theſe three or four reflexions, which ſeem to be very important to our preſent deſign.

The firſt is, That we can ſcarcely conceive a more ſimple and ſtrong way of proving a fact, than what we find in the books here mentioned. The deſign of the four Evangeliſts, for inſtance, is to prove that Jeſus, the ſon of *Mary*, is the promiſed Meſſiah; and that, in his birth, his life, his doctrine, his death, and reſurrection, we meet with all the characters which the Prophets attributed to the Meſſiah. How do the Evangeliſts execute this their deſign? In the moſt proper way imaginable to convince others, and moſt proportionable to their deſign: they ſimply relate the facts; and facts ſo clear, that if we do not queſtion the truth of them, we cannot doubt that Jeſus is the Meſſiah. They relate the moſt important of theſe facts, as things that happened in the face of the whole nation of the *Jews*, as I have ſhewed in the precedent chapter; they relate them as facts for the moſt part owned by the *Jews*, from which the malice of the *Jews* extorted other conſequences: they give us an account of the judgment which the *Jews* made concerning the miracles that he wrought on the ſabbath day, upon the Diſciples gathering the ears of corn; of the anſwer which the *Jews* made to *Pilate*, *We have no other king but* Cæſar.

The ſecond is, That the Apoſtles, ſuppoſing a general expectation of the Meſſiah, when Jeſus Chriſt appeared, ſhew that there was a very great knowledge of the prophecies that reſpected the Meſſiah, and a great impoſſibility of applying thoſe oracles to particular facts, if the truth of thoſe facts had not been beyond conteſt. Now we find very few oracles of which they did not make an application to the life and actions of our Saviour. We will ſuppoſe the Apoſtles to have been men of great abilities, and who had long ſtudied the books of the Prophets, that they might tear out ſuch ſmall paſſages as they fancied might be applicable to Jeſus Chriſt: however, it cannot be denied, that it does not appear by their writings that they had ſuch an exact knowledge of the prophecies; whence it might follow that they judged them to be applicable to Chriſt, by comparing them with the facts which they relate. 2. That they had this knowledge in common with the reſt of the *Jews*, who at this day apply the ſame texts to the Meſſiah, if they are not conſtrained by their clearneſs to wreſt them ſome other way.

The third reflexion is, That, in the relation of theſe facts, they give us all the marks of an extraordinary ſincerity; they repreſent indeed whatſoever was for their maſter's glory, but they do as well relate thoſe things which ſeem to be ſhameful to his memory. They tell us of the Angels that aſſiſted at his birth, and at his death; but tell us withal, that

hat he was tempted of the Devil, and in all appearance forſaken by God at his death. They tell us, that the multitudes were reſolved to take him by force, and make him their king, as acknowledging him for the Meſſiah; and they tell us, that the ſame multitude, ſome time after, demanded him to be crucified.

The fourth is, That they repreſent very naturally all the judgments of the ſynagogue againſt Jeſus: they repreſent him as excommunicated and crucified by them; they deſcribe the reports that were current among the *Jews*; that the diſciples had taken away his body out of the ſepulchre; that the ſoldiers had depoſed the ſame, in the forms of law, before *Pilate*. From all which it appears that they were faithful hiſtorians, and not at all prepoſſeſſed; and that they uſed no invectives againſt the authors of theſe falſe reports, contenting themſelves to eſtabliſh the truth of the matter, by ſpecifying the places, the time, the witneſſes, and other circumſtances, which are proper to eſtabliſh the truth of the facts they relate.

Theſe four reflexions being once ſuppoſed, I ſay, it is impoſſible to diſpute the truth of theſe books, or to call their authority in queſtion: to be convinced of which, one needs only conſider theſe two things; the firſt is, that the Apoſtles are the authors of the books which paſs under their names; the other is, that their faithfulneſs is not to be ſuſpected by us.

The former of theſe is ſo univerſally received, that nothing will be certain in matters of this nature, if this be queſtioned.

The four Evangeliſts have publiſhed their writings in populous cities, where they have been conſtantly read every Lord's day in Chriſtian aſſemblies; as St. *Juſtin Martyr* aſſures us, in his apology, which was writ about the middle of the ſecond century.

The Apoſtles writ their epiſtles to numerous churches, to whom their hand, as well as the perſons by whom they ſent them, were well known. Can we inſtance in any writing in the world that hath been preſerved with the like carefulneſs? Let the *Jews* tell us what they pleaſe concerning the care and faithfulneſs of their anceſtors to preſerve the books of the *Old Teſtament*, they can alledge nothing, but we can alledge the ſame in favour of the books of the *New Teſtament*. They tell us, that *Moſes*, under the penalty of a curſe, had forbid the adding any thing thereto; and do not we read the ſame threatening in the laſt book of the *New Teſtament?* The philoſophers of each ſect have nothing of this weight to alledge, as an argument that the books which they aſcribe to their maſters are really theirs: we find only a few men in every age who made it their buſineſs to ſtudy the books of the philoſophers, phyſicians, and lawyers; but, ever ſince the Apoſtles, there have been Chriſtians who made it their buſineſs to peruſe and preſerve their writings, as conſidering that they are the fountains of eternal life.

One may upon this occaſion take notice of two things which deſerve ſome attention: the one is, That the deſign of ſome Heretics, as of *Marcion*, for inſtance, to corrupt the copies of the writings of the *New Teſtament*, which were found in the hands of thoſe of his ſect, is a good argument to prove that they could not be corrupted. In ſhort, we find all the world oppoſed themſelves againſt this corruption, and confuted them

them by the agreement of all the other copies in the world which were exempt from this corruption.

The other is, That if there are some books whose authority was doubtful for some time, by those who otherwise were accounted orthodox, yet this cannot justly prejudice the truth of the *New Testament:* the reason is, because this happened only to some few epistles, which were written, not to particular churches, but to whole nations. And indeed it is plain, from common sense, that when writings are sent to whole bodies (as the epistle of St. *Jude*) without communicating the copy to particular men, that they may with more justice be suspected, than those whose hand was known by many, and particularly by those to whom the epistles were sent.

Moreover, the account which the ancient fathers of the church give us of the uncertainties of this nature, sufficiently shew that they were very careful in examining these things; and when at any time some particular men did not use care enough in examining these books, as it once happened in the church of *Rosh* (*a*), where a book which was falsely attributed to St. *Peter* was preserved, supposing it to have been his, the other churches not consenting to it, that abuse was soon remedied, the writings abolished, that there is scarce a weak remembrance left of them.

One sees that these remarks are sufficient to assure us, that the Apostles are the authors of those books which bear their names: and if this way of confirming a matter of this nature be accounted good and solid, when we speak of the books of *Aristotle* or *Hippocrates*, it must be infinitely stronger when it is applied to the writings of the Apostles.

In short, these books were written to be read by persons of the meanest capacities, by women, by children, as well as by Doctors; and they treat of matters of which the whole world hath reason to be informed. If some *Jews* suffered martyrdom under *Antiochus*, to preserve the books of the *Old Testament*, we have like examples, and as numerous, of those who have done as much for the preservation of the books of the *New Testament*. Lastly, if the *Jews* have looked upon those as traitors and apostates, who gave up those books to the fury of their persecutors, the Christians have testified no less aversion for those who delivered the books of the Apostles to the fury of Heathens, even to the subjecting of them to the utmost rigour of ecclesiastical discipline, in the third century, and before.

(*a*) *Euseb.* lib. vi. cap. 12.

CHAP. XVIII.

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That one cannot doubt of the Faithfulneſs of the Witneſs of the Apoſtles concerning thoſe Facts which they relate.

NEITHER is it more difficult to eſtabliſh this ſecond truth, That the faithfulneſs of the Apoſtles cannot be reaſonably queſtioned. To be convinced of this, one needs only conſider the character of the Apoſtles, the character of their writings, of their ſermons, of the ſufferings, and of their martyrdom; and, laſt of all, the character of thoſe amongſt whom they wrote theſe things, and preached them to their death.

As to their ſermons, the Apoſtles were contemporaries with Jeſus Chriſt; they ſpoke of things which they had ſeen, and diſtinguiſhed them carefully from thoſe which they had learned another way. They were honeſt men, ſimple, and without learning, very fit to bear witneſs in matters of fact; they were perſons that preached nothing but love, and the ſtudy of truth; they proteſted, in the midſt of their ſufferings, thatthey could not conceal the things which they had ſeen and heard; they are men without covetouſneſs or ambition; they forſake all that they poſſeſs in the world; St. *Matthew* leaves his houſe and goods, to follow Jeſus Chriſt. Their epiſtles ſpeak nothing more than inſtances of Chriſtian poverty, of the loſs of their goods, and of mighty inſtances of their charity.

Theſe witneſſes are ſufficiently numerous; they preach and write in ſeveral places, and yet they agree admirably in their relations of the ſame facts: it appears they had ſuch lively and diſtinct impreſſions, that they frequently make uſe of the very ſame words. The difference which is found in ſome part of their books, is a manifeſt argument that nothing but the force of the matter made them agree in their relations.

And, indeed, how is it otherwiſe conceivable that four ſuch authors as the Evangeliſts, ſhould agree about ſo many opinions, ſo many miracles, ſo many prophecies, ſo many diſputes, and, in a word, about ſo many matters of fact? Shall we ſay that the ſecond took his copy from the firſt, the third from the ſecond, &c.? This appears to be evidently falſe, by peruſing of their works, and by the difference of their ſtyle.

And certainly there appears ſo great ingenuity in their writings, that we cannot accuſe them of having had a deſign to deceive the world: they tell you plainly of the meanneſs of their condition and original; they ſincerely diſcover their own weakneſſes, their ambition, their vanity, their diſputes, their heats, their murmurings. St. *Matthew* tells us that he was a publican, that is, a ſervant of the *Roman* power, whom the *Jews* looked upon as an excommunicated perſon, and as an enemy of their own nation: he relates the ridiculous pretenſion of the ſons of *Zebedee*, founded on the carnal notion of their mother concerning the temporal kingdom of the Meſſiah. They ſet down St. *Peter*'s denying of his maſter; they do not diſſemble their common ignorance, which made them

them expect a temporal king in Jesus Christ; they frankly publish their own incredulity, when *Mary Magdalen* brought them the news of our Saviour's resurrection; and they describe the obstinate resistance of St. *Thomas* about this matter, against the unanimous testimony of all his companions.

They do not content themselves with saying in general that some illustrious facts have happened, but they punctually set down all the circumstances; so that it clearly appears their design was to have their writings examined, and that after an exact search men might acquiesce in the conclusions which they draw from thence. For instance, they do not tell us that Jesus Christ raised a great many from the dead; they only tell us of three, describing the circumstances of their resurrection, the time, the place, the age, the persons, the assistants; and all these, with other particulars, which impostors care not to enter upon, lest they should contradict themselves, or be easily confuted.

I have already shewn, that the nature of the things themselves which the Disciples of Jesus Christ have written, is such as will not permit us to accuse them of having had a design to impose upon the world: they are facts, and not discourses, which are left upon record; and facts relating to the most important matter in the world, than which none was ever more thoroughly examined; they are facts which are linked so closely, and which have so strict a dependance one upon the other, and so interwoven with the most public transactions, either in civil or religious affairs, that it was impossible for them to form the design of such an imposture.

In short, it is very remarkable, that these facts were publicly known to the kings of *Judea*, to the *Roman* magistrate, to the principal ministers of state, and of their religion, and to the whole nation of the *Jews* assembled ten several times at their solemn feasts; to the several sects of the *Jewish* religion, the *Pharisees*, *Sadducees*, and *Essens*, who are attacked, censured, and confuted, in these books.

One ought to consider, after all, that the Apostles at first preached and wrote in *Judea*, where were the witnesses of those miracles which they related; the impotent, the blind, the deaf, which Jesus Christ had restored; the dead whom he raised, the *Scribes* and *Pharisees* whom he censured, the *Sadducees* whom he confuted, the auditors who had heard him preach, the towns wherein he had conversed most familiarly, the same people that followed him, the same enemies that conspired his death, the same judges, and the same authority which condemned him to death.

St. *Luke*, in the relation he gives us of the speeches and apologies which the Apostles made before kings, before the great council of the *Jews*, and in the midst of their synagogues, brings them in speaking of the facts contained in the Gospel, as of matters publicly known and attested by a vast number of witnesses: thus St. *Peter* speaks of them in the tenth of the *Acts*; and the other sacred writers spake of them in the same manner in their epistles.

Here is a new character which we ought carefully to observe: we find no temporal interest which obliged the Disciples to adhere to Jesus Christ; and we find yet less reason to suppose, if Jesus Christ had not been raised

from

om the dead, and they had not ſeen him after his death, that they ſhould ive had any concern for his glory: they would certainly have con- mned and anathematized him as an impoſtor, who by means of ſome lſe miracles, and an affected holineſs, had abuſed them; whereas in- ed we find that they defended the glory of Jeſus Chriſt with ſo much eat, and that with ſo conſtant a teſtimony to his reſurrection, that they poſed themſelves to all manner of reproaches, to all ſorts of puniſh- ent, and moſt cruel deaths, to confirm the belief of that fact. They ſpiſe the *anathemas* of the *Jewiſh* ſynagogue, they contemn their pub- obloquies, they value not the hatred of their whole nation: they each this crucified perſon in *Judea*, they preach him alſo in other untries, that he might be equally adored by *Jews* and *Heathens:* they ave their employments, to follow this *Jeſus*; and after they had accom- nied him three years, they depart from *Judea*, to go and confound the olatry of the world, and within *Rome* itſelf to decry the gods they wor- ipped, obliging them to acknowledge him whom the men of *Jeruſalem* id crucified, for their God; him, who had been the deteſtation of the *ews*; him, whom the *Roman* magiſtrate had given up to their fury, in aking him undergo the puniſhment appointed for ſlaves.

Laſtly, one ought to obſerve it as a thing of great weight in this whole ueſtion, that this teſtimony of the Apoſtles, which is ſo uniform, ſo lemn, ſo well confirmed by all manner of means, and ſealed with their aths, is not conteſted or contradicted by any hiſtorian of that time. here was nothing more eaſy, either for *Jews* or *Gentiles*, than to con- nce the world of the falſehood of the facts related in the Goſpel; they id the books of the Apoſtles in their hands, they were maſters of the ublic records: it was a matter of general concernment to the *Jews*, oppoſe themſelves to an impoſture of ſo terrible a conſequence as the ſtory of the Evangeliſts was, if it had been entirely falſe; neither was leſs the intereſt of the *Romans* to expoſe a ſect, of whom *Pliny* the ounger tells us, that all ſorts of people joined with them, though they ere perſecuted with incredible violence. In the mean time we find no- dy that hath contradicted the relation of the Apoſtles, nor any author at has writ againſt Jeſus Chriſt or his Apoſtles. A long time after in- eed there was a book ſeen, called *The Acts of* Pilate, publiſhed by the rder of the emperor *Maximian*, which endeavoured to overthrow the uth of the facts that are related in the Goſpels; but thoſe acts are con- adicted by all the Heathen hiſtorians yet remaining that were contem- orary with the Apoſtles. Finally, a vaſt number of *Jews* and *Gentiles* ere immediately convinced by the authority of the Apoſtles; and a elief in the Goſpel hath paſſed from *Judea* to the ends of the world, ccording to the predictions which God gave by the miniſtry of the Pro- hets, and by the mouth of our Saviour.

CHAP. XIX.

More Reaſons to manifeſt the Faithfulneſs of the Apoſtles.

WHAT I have already alledged might be ſufficient to eſtabliſh the faithfulneſs of the Apoſtles; but, for a fuller conviction of the reader, concerning ſo weighty a truth of our religion, I ſhall ſuperadd ſome few more reflexions.

Firſt of all, it cannot be denied that the form of the writings of the *New Teſtament* is vaſtly different from thoſe which may be ſuſpected as forgeries. When the four Evangeliſts had related the miraculous birth of *John the Baptiſt*, they next ſet down that of our Saviour Chriſt, with the actions of his life, until his death, which does not comprehend above four or five years.

St. *Luke* writes the hiſtory of the Apoſtles, and in particular that of St. *Paul*, and takes in only the ſpace of about thirty years: now let any one judge whether they who confine themſelves to ſo narrow limits in reſpect of time, place, and perſons, have any deſign to impoſe.

The remainder of theſe books is compoſed of two ſorts of writings, one epiſtolary, and the other prophetical: for the prophetical parts, time muſt prove the truth of the predictions which are contained in the *Apocalypſe*, as well as of thoſe which are found in ſome of the epiſtles of the Apoſtles.

As for the epiſtles, beſides ſome moral inſtructions, they are almoſt all employed in deciding ſome queſtions which the calling of the *Gentiles* to the Goſpel, and the aboliſhing of the ceremonial law, had raiſed in the minds of the *Jews* who were converted to Chriſtianity. We know that, of all writings, epiſtles are the moſt certain monuments, and thoſe which men endeavour to forge leaſt.

After all, it is certain that the ſacred writers have with great care ſet down the time in which every event happened, as well according to the ſtyle of the *Jews*, in pointing out to us their ſolemn feaſts, as that of the *Gentiles*, by ſetting down the year of the *Roman* emperor, and the character of the *Roman* magiſtrates.

A ſecond character, which hinders us from accuſing theſe books as forgeries, is this, that we cannot deny but that theſe books are of a very particular nature: they contain ſeveral conſiderable oracles which were to be fulfilled in the ſame generation, as that of the deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*; they contain a continued ſeries of miracles, of which all *Judea* was witneſs; they contain a great number of ſermons, preached upon ſeveral illuſtrious occaſions in the ſynagogues, in the temple of *Jeruſalem*, and before thouſands of people in the wilderneſs. Let any one judge whether it would be an eaſy thing to make theſe writings to be received, if we ſhould ſuppoſe them to be lately forged.

This third reflexion is alſo conſiderable: it is certain that the Goſpel was preached in the greateſt cities of the empire, by the Apoſtles, and the Diſciples of Jeſus: the hiſtory of the Apoſtles, and their epiſtles themſelves, make it evident, that there were numerous churches at *Rome*, *Corinth*,

orinth, *Theſſalonica*, *Philippi*, *Epheſus*, *Antioch*, and ſeveral other famous laces: it is alſo known that there were *Jewiſh* ſynagogues in the ſam laces; now if this be the caſe, what poſſibility is there of ſuſpecting he leaſt impoſture in the books of the Apoſtles, if we conſider how they ere drawn up? The Diſciples of Chriſt did not only preach in the ſynagogues the ſame things which they have put in writing, but they alſo ngaged the *Jews* to examine them, becauſe they affirmed them with a onſtancy which the *Jews* could not but look upon as incredible obſtinacy: firſt of all, that theſe were things beyond diſpute, and could not e doubted of. Secondly, That they had been long ſince foretold by the rophets. Thirdly, that they were an exact accompliſhment of other rophecies which had relation to the promiſed Meſſiah. Fourthly, That eeing they could not queſtion the facts contained in the Goſpel, they ught to renounce Judaiſm, to receive baptiſm, and become Chriſtians.

'Tis alſo of great importance to obſerve further, as I have already lone, that the books of the *New Teſtament* were penned before the overhrow of the commonwealth of the *Jews*. There are only ſome of the vorks of St. *John*, which were writ after the deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*. I ave before obſerved that the Divine Providence ordered it ſo, that all he *Jews* for five-and-thirty years together, repairing thrice a year to *Jeuſalem* at their three ſolemn feſtivals, might have greater opportunities o inform themſelves of the truth of the facts contained in the Goſpels, and the Acts of the Apoſtles.

To this remark I ſhall now add two weighty conſiderations; the one is, That the Chriſtians for ſome years ſubmitted themſelves to the ceremonial law, and repaired with the *Jews* to *Jeruſalem*, and by this means were engaged to examine the facts contained in the Goſpel. The other is, That after the council of *Jeruſalem*, they were diſpenſed with as to that cuſtom, as well as the obſerving of all the other parts of the ceremonial law, which ſet the Chriſtians in a greater oppoſition to the *Jews*, and ſo increaſed the neceſſity of examining very ſcrupulouſly on both ſides, whatſoever was for or againſt them in thoſe matters of religion.

This obſervation leads us naturally to another, That it is abſolutely impoſſible that an impoſture of this nature ſhould not be diſcovered, when there ariſeth a difference between thoſe, who may be looked upon as the authors of the forgery, and thoſe who after them endeavoured to gain credit to it. Now if we find that one Diſciple of Jeſus Chriſt betrays him without accuſing him of the leaſt crime or impoſture; if we have ſeen the Chriſtians at firſt united in the ſame aſſemblies with the *Jews*; and that there were ſeveral conteſts and diſputes between the Apoſtles and thoſe firſt Chriſtians, yet without calling thoſe facts which are contained in the Goſpel, in queſtion by either ſide: S. *Paul* takes notice of the conteſts which happened betwixt him and S. *Peter*; S. *Luke* relates the heats between S. *Paul* and *Barnabas*, upon very ſlight occaſions, he ſets down alſo the diſpute which aroſe about the diſtribution of alms to the *Greek* and *Jewiſh* widows: one ſees that there aroſe a diſpute amongſt the Apoſtles themſelves, about the calling of the *Gentiles* to the Goſpel; one ſees afterwards the obſtinacy of ſome of the *Jews* of

of the sect of the *Pharisees*, who maintained the absolute necessity of submitting to circumcision, and S. *Paul's* opposition set down in his epistle to the *Galatians*. We need no more to make it evident, that there could be no concert nor collusion between them, to deceive or impose upon those to whom they preached the Gospel.

Let us go a little further; a dispute happens about a capital point of Christian religion, about the resurrection: insomuch that S. *Paul* thinks himself obliged to write concerning it to the *Corinthians*, so that there was a necessity of examining the truth of the resurrection of Jesus Christ again.

Now we find that S. *Paul*, to confirm this doctrine in general, chiefly makes use of the instance of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, which he proves by arguments taken from the fact itself, that is, by witnesses whom he produceth. Whereupon I make this considerable reflection, That in comparing this dispute of S. *Paul* with the writings of the Evangelists, it clearly appears that they did not allege all the proofs they might have done. None of them relates in particular the number of those who saw Jesus Christ in *Galilee* upon the holy mountain; but S. *Paul* who had examined the faithfulness of their relations, and knew the witnesses, specifies the number, and observes that many of them were yet alive, if perhaps any of them were already dead.

I shall add only two considerations more, which prove that it was even impossible for the Apostles to impose upon the world on this occasion. The first is taken from their state and condition. They are no great lords, whose power might terrify any one from examining their writings; or whose reputation could not have been called in question without danger: on the contrary, they were men of mean condition, employed in base professions, often cast into prisons, and from time to time obliged to appear before magistrates for the same doctrine and the same facts which they published to the world. Let us consider then whether it were an easy matter for S. *Paul* for instance, I say for this S. *Paul*, a maker of tents, this S. *Paul* without reputation, without riches; this S. *Paul* who was seized at *Jerusalem* after divers persecutions, this S. *Paul* who was sent a prisoner to *Rome*, and imprisoned there under the power of the *Roman* magistrate, and who at last lost his life by *Nero's* order, to make those blindly believe all he said, who were at liberty to examine, whether all that *Luke* related as happening to him at *Jerusalem*, at *Maltha*, at *Philippi*, at *Athens*, were indeed true, or only a framed story.

The second thing we ought to observe is, That not only the books of the Apostles were publicly read every Lord's day, by a constant law, of which we have most authentic witnesses in the writings of the Apostles themselves, and in other ancient books, which are still extant; but also that they were all of them written, not in *Hebrew*, which at that time was a dead tongue; not in *Syriac*, a language spoken in very few places; but in *Greek*, which at that time was the language commonly received throughout all the *Roman* empire; and besides was the language into which the Divine Providence had caused the *Old Testament* to be translated about three ages before, that men might compare the ancient oracles and their accomplishment together.

CHAP.

CHAP. XX.

That the whole Model of the Religion and Commonwealth of the JEWS *is at this Day ſo entirely deſtroyed, that the* MESSIAH *could no more be known.*

WHAT I have before ſet down to eſtabliſh the truth of thoſe facts which ſerve for a foundation to the Chriſtian religion, is certainly ſufficient to anſwer the deſign which I formed in writing theſe reflections upon the books of the holy Scripture; and I believe I may with juſtice conclude, That as nothing is more unconteſtable than the truth of thoſe books, and of the facts in them related; ſo there is nothing more certain than the truth and divinity of the Chriſtian religion. So that now I have only two things to do, with which I conceive it will be neceſſary to conclude theſe reflections: The one is, to ſhew the abſolute impoſſibility of conceiving any other accompliſhment of the ancient oracles than what is ſet down in the Goſpel: The other is, that concerning the diviſions amongſt Chriſtians, which are a ſcandal to the *Jews*, and eſpecially concerning the difficulty of the myſteries which the Goſpel propoſes, which are ſo many ſtumbling blocks to them which hinder them from diſcerning thoſe characters of truth in the Goſpel, which by the fulfilling of the ancient oracles, appear therein with ſo much luſtre. The former of theſe ſhall be the ſubject of this, and the latter of the next chapter.

As the pulling down of the ſcaffolds which were only ſet up to build a palace, is an infallible ſign that the building is finiſhed, ſo one may ſay, that the total defacing of the model, which God had formed in the law, that the Meſſiah at his coming might be certainly known, is an unanſwerable proof that he is already come. It is worth our pains to make ſome reflections on this overthrow, that we may conclude againſt the *Jews*, that if the Meſſiah was yet to appear in the world, it would be impoſſible to know him, according to the characters which God had given of him before his appearing.

In the firſt place therefore, whereas God had confined the *Jews* to the land of *Canaan*, that they might be viſible to all the poſterity of *Noah*, of whom one part, that is, the offſpring of *Cham*, poſſeſſed *Egypt* and *Africa*; the poſterity of *Japhet*, *Europe* and the leſſer *Aſia*; and thoſe of *Shem*, the reſt of *Aſia*; the *Jews* at preſent are driven from that country; and far from being reſtored to it after ſeventy years, as they were by *Cyrus*, they have been for ever baniſhed thence, by a decree of the emperor *Adrian*, who forbad them ſo much as to turn their eyes towards *Judea*, which was in the year of Chriſt 135. The Heathen *Celſus* inſults over them in theſe remarkable words: *They have no more*, ſaith he, *either land or houſe remaining to them.*

Secondly, ſo far were they from having any remainders of a temporal power, that they were then wholly deprived of it. See what *Tertullian*

faith of them in the year of our Saviour 204. (*b*). *They wander up and down the world like diſperſed vagabonds, baniſhed from their climate and country, without man, without God for their king, and are not permitted, as ſtrangers, to ſet foot on their native ſoil.* We read a decree of *Honorius* the emperor, which deprives them of the right of nominating their patriarchs, or of paying them any tribute; which ſhews that their authority was wholly extinct.

Thirdly, Their temple at *Jeruſalem* being deſtroyed in the ſeventieth year of our Lord, as that in *Egypt* called *Onion* was the year following, it could never be built again, notwithſtanding that *Julian* the apoſtate, out of his hatred to the Chriſtians, favoured that enterpriſe in the year of our Saviour 363. There is a letter ſtill extant which *Julian* writ to the *Jews*, to aſſure them of his protection, and to encourage them to that work, but it was not ſo much his death which daſhed that undertaking, as a very memorable oppoſition from Heaven.

Marcelinus a Heathen gives us this account of it (*c*). *And being deſirous to propagate the memory of his government by the greatneſs of his works, he with vaſt expence deſigned to rebuild the ſplendid temple which was formerly at* Jeruſalem, *which after many and bloody battles, being beſieged by* Veſpaſian, *and afterwards by* Titus, *was at laſt taken with difficulty: he committed the care of haſtening the buſineſs to* Alypius *of* Antioch, *who had formerly been pro-præfect of* Britain. *As therefore this* Alypius *was vigorouſly proſecuting the work, being aſſiſted by the lieutenant of the province, terrible balls of fire frequently breaking forth near the foundations, ſometimes burnt the workmen, and made the place inacceſſible: thus the deſign was laid aſide, the element itſelf beating them back on purpoſe.* *Julian* eaſily apprehended that their religion would periſh, and that it could never be reſtored without the temple.

In the fourth place the obſervation of ſome of their laws was abſolutely forbidden, as being contrary to thoſe of the *Roman* empire. Thus they were not ſuffered to have many wives.

Upon this overthrow many inconveniencies followed, which it will be convenient to repreſent at one view.

1. They no longer know thoſe perſons who at the firſt diviſion of the land, by *Joſhua*, were owners of the different parts of the land of *Canaan*.

2. Their families and tribes are confounded; their jubilee, which could not be kept but in the land of *Canaan*, and which obliged them to ſtudy their genealogies, having ceaſed long ſince.

(*b*) *Diſperſi, palabundi, & cœli & ſoli ſui extorres, vagantur per orbem, ſine homine, ſine Deo rege, quibus nec advenarum jure terram patriam ſaltem veſtigio ſalutare conceditur.* Apolog. cap. 21.

(*c*) *Lib.* 23. *Imperiique ſui memoriam magnitudine operum geſtiens propagare, ambitioſum quondam apud Hieroſolymam templum quod poſt multa & interneciva certamina, obſidente Veſpaſiano, poſteaque Tito, egrè eſt expugnatum, inſtaurare ſumptibus cogitabat immodicis: negotiumque maturandum Alypio dederat Antiochenſi, qui olim Britannias curaverat pro præfectis. Cum itaque rei idem fortiter inſtaret Alypius, juvaretque provinciæ Rector, metuendi globi flammarum prope fundamenta crebris aſſultibus erumpentes, fecere locum exuſtis aliquoties operantibus inacceſſum: hocque modo elemento deſtinatius repellente, ceſſavit inceptum.*

3. The

3. The family of *David* is at this day utterly unknown.

4. They have no more lawful prieſts to obſerve the primogeniture, to examine the tokens of virginity, tho' it appears that, according to God's deſign, theſe laws were given on purpoſe to aſcertain the knowledge of the Meſſiah, and to be like incloſures about this important truth, in the compaſs of which it might be the better examined.

Certainly if the *Jews* were ſtill in poſſeſſion of *Judea*, if they had their kings of the tribe of *Judah*, if they had their prieſts, if they were aſſured of their genealogies, if they ſtill enjoyed all the other neceſſary means for eſtabliſhing the certainty of their deſcents, if their temple had ſtill ſubſiſted in its former luſtre, and that the ſacrifices appointed by the laws were ſtill offered there: the *Jews* might boldly anſwer that the *Shiloh* was not yet come, that is, they ought not to deſpair of ſeeing the Meſſiah born at *Bethlehem*, of the ſeed of *David*, and entering the temple of *Jeruſalem*. Then the prophecy of *Daniel*, which determines 490 years for the term in which the Meſſiah was to appear, and be cut off by a violent death and puniſhment, would ſeem to be eluded.

But the term of the Meſſiah's coming is paſt, the commonwealth of the *Jews* is overturned, the temple of *Jeruſalem* is deſtroyed 1600 years ſince: there are no more genealogies among the *Jews*; they do not know their tribes, much leſs their families: how then can it be ſuppoſed that God ſhould be true in his oracles (as we muſt acknowledge him to be) if they were never anſwered by the event?

To ſpeak the truth, it is impoſſible to conſider the arguments we have alleged to prove that Jeſus Chriſt is the Meſſiah, and eſpecially thoſe demonſtrations which the Apoſtles have given us, without acknowledging theſe two things:

The firſt is, That it was very eaſy at the time of Jeſus Chriſt's appearing, to examine whether he who declared himſelf to be the Meſſiah, were ſo indeed; ſo it is abſolutely impoſſible to examine it, or know it, ſince the deſtruction of that model, if we ſuppoſe that God at firſt framed it for the determining of this queſtion, as we have no reaſon to doubt it.

The ſecond is, That the Chriſtians exactly followed this Divine model, and being convinced of the truth of the facts which exactly correſponded with it, and which anſwered it in all its parts, they had all the reaſon imaginable to believe that Jeſus Chriſt was the Meſſiah.

In ſhort, if we conſider it well, we ſhall find that the whole Chriſtian religion is nothing but a queſtion of fact between the *Jews* and *Chriſtians*: but ſuch a queſtion as the *Jews* at preſent are not in a condition to maintain againſt the Chriſtians.

Both *Jews* and Chriſtians agree in the characters of the Meſſiah, or at leaſt about the moſt of them. According to theſe characters the Meſſiah ought to be come: the Chriſtians maintain that they may be found in Jeſus Chriſt, and they prove it by matter of fact; wherefore we muſt conclude, That either theſe characters attributed to the Meſſiah, are not proper characters to know him by, and ſo the wiſdom of God will be eluded, and both *Jews* and Chriſtians equally deceived, in taking that for a character of the Meſſiah which is not; or elſe that both the Meſ-

ſiah

siah is certainly come, and that he is no other than that Jesus whom we worship.

CHAP. XXI.

That the Greatness of the Mysteries of the Christian Religion, and the Division which is amongst Christians, cannot be any prejudice to the Proofs of the Truth of the Christian Religion.

I COME now to examine the double stumbling block which the *Jews* pretend against the Christian religion. *This religion*, say they, *propounds doctrines that are inconceivable, and contrary to reason: for instance, that of the Trinity, that of the Incarnation and the Divinity of the Messiah.* These are the doctrines which the *Jews* reject, as absolutely incompatible with the books of the *Old Testament*, which we have received from their hands.

But it is an easy matter to answer this objection. 1. It is founded upon a total forgetfulness of the solidity of those proofs of fact, which I have alleged. Jesus Christ is risen from the dead; this is a fact confirmed by several witnesses. It appears from *Tacitus*, that Jesus Christ suffered death under *Tiberius*, *Pontius Pilate* being governor of *Judea*. It is known that *Claudius* banished the Christians from *Rome*, in the year of our Lord 54. It is evident from *Tacitus*, in his life of *Nero*, that he accused the Christians of burning the city of *Rome*, which himself was the author of; the Christians therefore made a considerable body in the capital city of the empire, and this happened in the year of our Lord 64. *Suetonius* says the same thing. 2. It appears that *Pliny*, in *Trajan*'s time, takes notice of the manner of their meetings. 3. *Dion Cassius* sets down the accusation brought in against *Flavius* and *Domitilla*, as against Atheists; which is the title *Julian* the apostate gives to *Constantine*, because the Christians rejected the worship of the Heathen gods. 4. It appears by the latter end of the *Acts of the Apostles* that this book was writ in the year of our Lord 63; and yet this book supposes the Gospel of S. *Luke* to have been written before it; and S. *Luke*'s Gospel takes it for granted, that some of the other Gospels were already published. 5. It appears from the writings of *Clemens Romanus*, that the Epistle to the *Hebrews* was then written; and the same may be gathered from the books of S. *Ignatius*, *Polycarp*, and S. *Justin*. These facts, which are certain, are sufficient to prove that immediately after the death of Jesus Christ, his Apostles, and their Disciples, as eye-witnesses, maintained the truth of his resurrection. After this it may indeed be disputed, by what power he was raised, whether by a Divine power, or by his own; but it is ridiculous to dispute the fact by reasonings drawn from pretended absurdities which one may think to find in the doctrines of the *Gospel*.

Secondly, These mysteries, as for instance that of the Trinity, relates

lates to the Divine nature, which is incomprehenſible, ſo that it is no ſtrange thing if an idea of it be propoſed to us, which not being diſtinctly known by us, may raiſe difficulties and perplexities in our minds. If I would diſcourſe with one born blind, of the ſun, of its light and heat, and ſhould attribute to the ſun the production of light, and afterwards of heat, he would find an infinite trouble not to imagine three ſuns. It is known how the philoſophers, who agreed about the unity of the ſoul, have notwithſtanding been obliged to attribute ſeveral faculties to it, which the common people look upon as very different things, and which ſeem to oppoſe the ideas of its unity and ſimplicity.

In the third place, The Chriſtians prove very ſolidly, that theſe myſteries have been clearly propoſed by the Apoſtles, who received their light from heaven as to theſe truths, and ſo might neceſſarily be believed upon their word, for the ſame reaſon that the Prophets of the *Old Teſtament* were formerly believed.

Moreover, they aſſert that theſe doctrines were firſt expreſſed, tho' not ſo clearly, in the *Old Teſtament*, which is in the hands of the *Jews*, the mortal enemies of Chriſtians.

I add to theſe remarks, that moſt of thoſe facts whoſe truth is ſo invincibly eſtabliſhed, ſuppoſe theſe doctrines; and that the whole frame of the religion doth ſo neceſſarily require them, that we rob it of a conſiderable part of its glory in queſtioning or conteſting any of them.

Theſe reflections may ſuffice in general to reſolve this difficulty of the *Jews*; and, for a more particular ſatisfaction, we refer the reader to thoſe books which purpoſely treat of theſe myſteries, deſiring him to obſerve carefully, that commonly the moſt difficult objections of Heretics againſt theſe matters, do rather oppoſe the terms which are made uſe of, or the notions which men follow in ſpeaking of theſe truths, than the propoſitions contained in the writings of the *New Teſtament*.

At leaſt one may be aſſured, that the *Jews* are conſtrained to reſolve ſeveral parallel objections, to which one can ſcarcely give a ſatisfactory anſwer, without borrowing ſome diſtinctions and notions from the Chriſtians.

Neither can the ſecond objection of the *Jews* give us any more diſturbance. It is true that there have been diviſions amongſt Chriſtians, and are ſtill to this day. What can we conclude thence? Can we reaſonably conclude that therefore the firſt founders of Chriſtianity were doubtful concerning the truth of thoſe facts which are the ſupport and foundation of it?

On the contrary, upon an attentive obſervation one may find,

1. That hereſies have only ſerved to render the truth of theſe facts more inconteſtable, by obliging thoſe that had conſidered of them, to examine their certainty with more care and application. This is the judgment one ought to make upon all thoſe hereſies in the ſecond age, about the truth of the fleſh of Jeſus Chriſt, or about the truth of his death: from thence men took occaſion to take notice of, and collect with great care, all the circumſtances that prove the truth of both theſe facts.

2. We find that the greateſt part of theſe conteſts do not concern the truth of the facts, but the ſeveral conſequences drawn from them, the truth of thoſe matters continuing ſtill beyond diſpute. This we find in the

the dispute raised about the *millennium*, the truth of the promises of Jesus Christ being equally believed by both the disputing parties; but differently understood, according to the temper of those that considered of them; some forming gross and sensual conceptions concerning them; others having a more spiritual relish, which they had acquired by studying the prophecies, and their true sense.

3. We find that this division which had sprung up amongst Christians, is one of the most solid proofs of the truth of the books of the *New Testament*. If some fools have endeavoured to decry some of them, or to falsify some particular places, we see that both parties unite to repel that violence, by producing their copies, and beating back the impostors with their united strength. One sees that *Tertullian*, tho' a *Montanist*, writ prescriptions against Heretics; and *Epiphanius* takes notice (without any respect to some that were orthodox) of their crime in blotting out of their copies, that Christ had wept.

It is known that the division of the *Jews* into *Karaites* and *Thalmudists*, the jealousy between the *Jews* and *Samaritans*, and the division between the *Jews* and *Christians*, is a means of preserving the Scripture, and hindering its corruption, each party being very vigilant to hinder their adversaries from attempting any thing to its prejudice, in corrupting a book which they consider as common to them all.

I might observe many other advantages which accrue to the truth from these human failings; but I will only instance in one, which has always seemed to me very considerable; and that is, That these Heretics distinctly prove the truth of the predictions of our Saviour. An impious person would have reason to accuse our oracles as false, if there had never been any heresies. But truth triumphs in seeing so great a multitude of them, who the more they increase, the more she sees herself confirmed and established. This is the reason induced God to permit so great an increase in the first ages, when the truth, meeting with the greatest opposition by prosecutions, stood in the greatest need of sensible characters by which it might be known.

I conclude this work with desiring my reader to consider these reflections upon the holy Scripture here propounded, with a serious attention, and to examine the coherence and indissoluble connexion of them; and with prayer to God that it may please him to make them serviceable to advance the glory of his name, which is the only end I have proposed to myself in the writing of them.

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